



## Newsletter September 2021

### **Welcome back!**

We begin this new school year with an exciting period of change and transition. Following the retirement of much-loved principal, Frances Lynch, we have a number of staff changes here in Coolanarney NS. Lorraine Mahon has been appointed as principal and continues to teach Junior Infants, Senior Infants and 1st Class. Mrs Gath will teach 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Miss Flynn, who is currently on maternity leave, will move to the senior room with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Miss Delaney will teach 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> until Miss Flynn returns to school. We also welcome our new permanent teacher, Mr Bolger, who joins our staff in the role of Special Education Teacher. We are very lucky to have secured Miss Delaney and Mr Bolger and hope that they will enjoy their time in Coolanarney NS.

On behalf of all the staff I would like to welcome the children back for this new school year and hope it is a happy and productive one for all. An especially warm welcome to our 11 new Junior Infant pupils, who begin their school journey with us here in Coolanarney.

It is again a precarious time for re-opening of schools and we continue to implement Covid-19 policies and procedures. We are hopeful that we have the necessary control measures in place to ensure that this will be a safe re-opening and thank parents for your continued co-operation in keeping Covid-19 out of our school. We would like to compliment the children on how well they continue to follow the necessary changes. Please see the Covid-19 information sheet for parents from gov.ie which is attached to this newsletter. It contains important information on the symptoms to be aware of.

### **Positive behaviour.**

As always at the start of a new school year, the importance of promoting positive behaviour and respect for each other is emphasised with the children. All the classes will spend time at the beginning of the year exploring these issues as part of the SPHE and the Core Curriculum programme. There will be a particular focus on playing well together, including everyone and reminding each other of our Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying policy. We will be going through the rules for positive behaviour with the children in the classes over the next few weeks and would appreciate if you would talk at home with your child/children also. Copies of the above policies are available on the school website [www.coolanarneyns.com](http://www.coolanarneyns.com). This year the hygiene/social rules relating to Covid-19 will be emphasised and the children will also have a forum to share worries and concerns in this regard.

### **Data Protection/ Child Protection**

Just a reminder that in keeping with our data protection and child protection policies, photos taken at any school event are for parents' personal use and images of children other than their own may not be shared on any social media platform.

### **Green Schools:**

The school will continue this year to partake in the international environmental education programme Green Schools. Work will continue this year on working towards our third green flag for water conservation, completion of which was delayed due to Covid-19.

### **School Improvement Plan 2021-2022**

The focus of our improvement plan for this year will be to upskill as a staff so that we can enhance implementation of the new Primary Language Curriculum. We will be looking at a specific area of improvement in the area of English language and plan implementation and improvement in a spiral approach through the school.

### **Primary Language Curriculum training - Half-day closure**

The school has been informed by DES that the next round of staff training to support the implementation of the Primary Language Curriculum is now available online. A half-day school closure has been sanctioned for all schools in Term 1 2021/22 to engage with this training. To facilitate this engagement, the school will take a half-day closure on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Class will end at 12 noon for all classes on that day.

### **Sport/P.E.**

We have been very fortunate to have been offered the opportunity by Offaly Sports Partnership to participate in a 6-week multi-sports programme beginning next Friday morning, 10<sup>th</sup> September. Children should wear uniform as normal each Friday with appropriate sports trousers and footwear.

Each child has also received the Active Me activity diary provided by Offaly Sports Partnership and their partners. Parents are asked to encourage their children to be active each day and keep track of their physical activity in the diary. In doing so children will be encouraged to reach their recommended levels of physical activity and help them lead a healthier lifestyle now and into the future.

### **Music**

Ms. Majella Killeen, our music teacher, will continue her programme of work with all classes from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> starting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September. As usual the cost of these music lessons is paid in two instalments, one is due now and one at the start of January.

The cost is as follows: 1 child €30 2 children, €50, 3 or more children €60. If paying by cheque please make cheques payable to Ms. Killeen. If the cost of these lessons is causing difficulty with any family, please contact the school and we will endeavour to help as best we can.

### **Voluntary Insurance**

As in previous years, there is an optional insurance scheme in place to cover children for medical / dental expenses that cannot be recouped from any other source. An application form giving full details is attached. Each family can include all children's names on one form. The closing date for entry into this scheme for this year is **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September** and it is important to return all forms by this date if you wish your child / children to avail of the scheme.

## **School photographs.**

County photos will attend on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September.

## **School Opening /Closing Times**

Class starts for all children at 9.20a.m. This year the school is open to receive pupils from **9.00 a.m.** and we are not insured to have children on the premises before this time. We have been reminded by our insurers to reiterate this point. Children should not enter the school before 9.00am.

## **Homework**

We are very conscious of and grateful for the support parents give to their children in ensuring that homework assignments from school are completed each day. Every child from 1<sup>st</sup> class has a journal in which his/her homework is written. Please sign off on your child's homework after you have ensured that it has been completed satisfactorily. If your child experiences any problem with the assignments, please let his/her teacher know by writing a note in the homework journal.

## **Car Park**

As you can see the car park operates in a one-way system. Please park in a parking space near the path so that the children can enter the car from the path. Alternatively there are 4 parking spaces in the centre of the yard. A pedestrian walkway is marked out to allow the children to reach the cars safely. In order for those drivers who are attempting to exit the car park safely **please do not park anywhere on the roadway from the school gate up to the laneway, or on the laneway itself.** It would pose a serious hazard and reduce visibility considerably. As congestion in the carpark has been an ongoing issue and we are trying to maintain safety and social distancing, this year there will again be two collection times: 3.00pm, if your child's surname is A to K and 3.10pm if your child's surname is L to W. If your child is on the early slot, this will continue for the first half of the school year, when the collection times will reverse. We hope this will lead to a safer, more manageable situation.

We would ask those collecting the children to be patient and aware of others at all times. The electronic are programmed to open from 8.40 to 9.30 in the mornings and from 1.30 to 3.30 in the evenings.

## **School Attendance**

Under The Educational Welfare Act, the school is obliged to inform the National Educational Welfare Board if a child has been absent for more than 20 days in any school year. If your child is unable to attend school for any reason, the school must be informed in writing. To make this easier for you, there are absence note forms in your child's homework journal. You can detach and send in to the class teacher as required.

## **A Timely Reminder !**

This is the time of year when headlice can become a plague! Remember anyone can pick up headlice. They are most common amongst young children as they often put heads together during play allowing the lice walk from one head to the next. Headlice do not reflect standards of hygiene. They are just as willing to live in the cleanest of hair. It is important that parents check their children's hair regularly. This way lice can be found before they have a chance to breed. They can then be treated stopping them being passed round the family...or from family

to family! The way to check someone's head is called "detection combing". This should be done regularly and in the case of a confirmed infection in one family member, the other members of the household should carry out "detection combing" twice weekly for one week. Please let the school know if you detect a case of headlice so parents can check their own child's hair. Everyone has a part to play!

### **School Uniforms**

Our school uniform consists of the school crested jumper, white polo shirt/shirt, **plain navy** tracksuit bottoms, trousers or skirt or the plaid skirt /pinafore. Many thanks to you all for your adherence to the school uniform rules . If anyone wishing to order extra jumpers, an order form is enclosed and should be returned to the school with the appropriate money before **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September**. This will be **the only extra order** submitted in this school year.

### **Healthy Lunch Policy**

The school's lunch policy has been very successful in encouraging the children to be conscious of the value of eating healthily. That means no crisps, fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate or crisps etc. Everyone must have a lunch box to bring home food waste. This has the added advantage of letting parents see what is being eaten and what is left. The Food Dudes initiative will recommence for one week in October when children will be provided with a selection of fruit and vegetables for lunch. It is hoped it will help to promote the value of fruit and vegetables in the children's diet. Just a reminder that a **small treat** for break-time on Friday's was agreed as part of the Healthy Lunch Policy and we would ask that all adhere to this.

### **Keeping In Touch.**

We will contact you with any concerns we might have regarding your child in school. Equally, we would encourage you to talk to us about your concerns, no matter how small. The class teacher should be the first port of call with any issues. After class is more suitable for formal meetings and appointments can be arranged by phone or letter. If it is difficult for you to visit the school, we can arrange to make phone contact at a suitable time. The homework journal or a note in the school bag is also useful. For more detailed or sensitive discussions, please arrange a meeting with the class teacher. This means both parties can sit down and discuss issues confidentially and in comfort.

### **School Calendar**

Enclosed is a copy of the school calendar for 2021/2022.

Half-day closure: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Class ends at 12 noon for all classes.

### **Contact Details**

***Please inform the school of any change in contact details*** - phone / mobile numbers/ email address, emergency contacts etc. The school has set up a database of mobile numbers to "text-a-parent". This enables us to contact families by text at short notice if necessary, so it is important that parents inform the school of any change in mobile number.

Many thanks for your ongoing support of the school. We look forward to working with you all over the coming year. As always, your ideas, suggestions and feedback are always welcome.

### **Congratulations and farewell!**

We extend our best wishes to our 3<sup>rd</sup> Class who will make their First Holy Communion in Mount Bolus Church on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> of September at 7pm Mass. And also to last year's 6<sup>th</sup> class who have moved on to the next stage in their education and will make their Confirmation on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September in Tullamore.

We also extend our congratulations to Miss Flynn and her husband Joey on the wonderful news of the arrival of their beautiful baby boy, James. We wish them much joy and happiness.

Finally, we bid a fond farewell and best wishes to Mrs Lynch on her retirement after 33 years of dedication to Coolanarney NS. Her drive, passion and commitment to high standards of education have brought our school to where it is today. The team here in Coolanarney are excited to carry on Mrs Lynch's legacy with the staff that she has led, nurtured and inspired.

As an outstanding teacher, principal, colleague and friend, Mrs Lynch is wished many happy years ahead filled with fun, laughter, good health and new adventures ahead.

Kind regards,

*Lorraine Mahon*