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***October Newsletter***

**Parking and Morning Supervision**

Once again, I’ll remind some parents that the car park at the school is for **staff parking only** and should not be used for parking, dropping off or collecting children. **Not only does this apply at 3pm, but it also applies at 9:20am and 2pm.** All parents are asked to use the car park adjacent to the church. I’ll also remind you that morning supervision does not begin until **9:10am** each morning. Therefore, your child should not be on the school premises before then.

**Uniforms and Tracksuits**

 We have been quite fortunate with the weather so far this year which has allowed us to use the school pitch as a play area. However, we can say with reasonable certainty that ground conditions will deteriorate shortly and children from first class up must wear football boots and spare tracksuit bottoms/shorts if they wish to play on the grass. Please ensure that names are written on all jumpers and tracksuits as we continue to have issues with misplaced clothing. With the exception of Junior and Senior Infants, school tracksuits should only be worn on designated PE days.

**New School Website**

As you might have seen by now, we’ve created a new school website. The parents’ section includes links to useful websites, previous newsletters, school calendar and a Parents’ Council page. We hope to grow and develop the website further in the coming months. You can check us out at [www.ballyadamsns.com](http://www.ballyadamsns.com)

**Parents Council**

The Parent’s Council A.G.M. was held on Monday September 19th. The following people were elected as officers;

Chairperson - Mary Howes Assistant Chairperson – Norah Brennan

Treasurer - Isabell O'Brien Assistant Treasurer - Denise Rainey

Secretary - Fran Murphy

We thank all members of our Parents’ Council for their continued support and dedication on behalf of the school and we look forward to another productive and fruitful school year.

Our biggest annual fundraiser is the Christmas Raffle, which will take place along with the Cake Sale after Sunday Mass on December 4th. If you have spot prizes we could use, they can be left in the office up until November 25th. Once again, the Parents’ Council have secured dates in Pettitt’s Athy and Supervalue Stradbally to sell tickets for the raffle. These were major sources of income last year and we are grateful to both for allowing us dates again this year. Following a meeting last night (Monday Oct 10th), the Parents’ Council have drawn up a timetable for parents to help out with ticket sales. If agreeable, please call or text Mary Howes (0867915000) with your name and date that suits. The dates are as follows;

Stradbally: Nov 18th & 19th

Pettitt’s: Nov 24th, 25th & 26th

The next Parents’ Council meeting is fixed for Wednesday November 23rd at 8:30pm.

**Halloween Walk**

Our annual Halloween Walk will take place on Friday October 28th at 1pm. The children (and teachers!) are encouraged to dress up on the day, so all types of witches, ghosts, fancy dress etc. are welcome. Parents are reminded that there **will not** be prizes for best dressed. The emphasis is on fun rather than competition and we discourage parents from buying expensive costumes for the day. Homemade costumes are usually the best! The Parents Council will once again provide a little treat for the children after they complete the sponsored walk. Sponsorship cards will be distributed in the coming days.

**Cumann na mBunscoil Football**

Our football teams have been very busy in recent weeks. The girls’ team topped their group, and therefore have gone straight through to the final. Well done to Ms. Walsh and all the girls on such a fantastic achievement. After two successive promotions in the past two years, the boys’ team have once again qualified for the knockout stages of their competition. They will play Ballyroan on Tuesday next in Rathleague (Portlaoise GAA grounds) at 11:30am. We wish Mr. Mullooly and the boys the best of luck and we encourage those who can to support the boys on the day.

We await confirmation on the dates of the finals, but they will definitely be the week leading up to the midterm break.

Cumann na mBunscol Laoise have asked us to inform parents and supporters that adults will be charged a small entry fee on finals day. Entry fees and programme sales are used to cover the costs of medals, referees and printing.

**Swimming**

6th Class, 5th Class and the 4th Class girls will commence swimming lessons in Portlaoise Leisure Centre on Thursday November 10th and these will run every Thursday until December 15th. The cost of swimming lessons and buses to and from Portlaoise is quite significant and the €5 per week charge per pupil does not cover the full cost. Each year the Parents’ Council help subsidise the cost.

Children are charged €5 per week or €30 for the six weeks. Payment can be made through the office or through our e-payment facility. Those signed up to e-payments will receive notification shortly and those wishing to sign-up/inquire should contact Pam in the office for further details. The majority of parents are now using the electronic payments and the feedback has been very positive.

Swimming for 4th Class boys, 3rd Class and 2nd Class will commence on March 2nd.

**Aistear**

The Junior and Senior Infant Class have begun the Aistear Programme. Aistear encourages learning through play and discussion. On behalf of Ms. Walsh and the school staff, we’d like to thank all those who kindly donated resources to help us get Aistear up and running in the school. Your generosity and thoughtfulness are greatly appreciated.

**MS Readathon**

The school is participating in the MS Readathon 2016, which raises much needed funding for the ongoing work of MS Ireland. The emphasis is not on the volume of books that children read, rather encouraging and nurturing an enjoyment of reading, while at the same time raising money for and an awareness of the work of MS Ireland. We hope to have the sponsorship cards back in the next week.

**GOAL Jersey Day**

Once again, the school will take part in GOAL’s annual Jersey Day this coming Friday, October 14th. This year, the focus is on Gambella in Ethiopia, where GOAL has been working with South Sudanese refugees since 2013. GOAL is leading a lifesaving nutrition programme in refugee camps where malnutrition levels are high, particularly among children. Each child is asked to bring in €2 or whatever you deem appropriate. The children are invited to don their favourite jersey/tracksuit/hoodie for the fun event.

**First Communion Dates**

The 2nd Class pupils in Mr. Mullooly’s room have begun preparations for their First Holy Communion. Listed below are some important dates for the parents of 2nd Class pupils to keep in mind;

- Enrolment Mass: ***Sunday, December 4th (please note change of date)*** in Ballyadams Church.

- Candle Ceremony: Sunday, January 22nd in Ballyadams Church.

- First Confessions: Wednesday, March 15th at 2pm in Ballyadams Church.

- First Holy Communion: Saturday, May 13th in Ballyadams Church.

**Parent/Teacher Meetings**

Parent/teacher meetings will take place on Wednesday November 30th and Thursday December 1st. Times for both days will be sent home two weeks in advance.

**Staff In-Service for Primary Language Curriculum**

Schools around the country will receive in-service on the new Primary Language Curriculum in the coming months. This will involve a full day school closure and we have no say as to when that day will be. As soon as we receive notification of a date, we will inform you promptly.

Mr. T. Fitzgerald

Principal