



St. Joseph's National School

Ballyadams, via Athy, Co. Laois

Telephone: 059 8627226

E-mail: principal.ballyadams@gmail.com

Office: secretary.ballyadams@gmail.com

Website: ballyadamsns.com

Twitter@ballyadamsns

October Newsletter 20.10.20

Returning To School

The Halloween Break is almost upon us. As the situation in relation to Covid-19 deteriorates in the country we are grateful to all members of our school community for their unwavering commitment to our continued health and safety. The glass is half full attitude is emblematic of all in our school community in Ballyadams N.S.

I would like to applaud the efforts of all the children for their amazing efforts and enthusiasm in transitioning back to school in recent months. The application to proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette has been excellent. Despite the ever present threat of Covid-19 it has been a welcome return to school for the children, their teachers and all families after several months of remote learning and much speculation regarding schools re-opening.

I would like to thank all members of the teaching and ancillary staff in Ballyadams N.S for their exceptional commitment and dedication to the children prior to school re-opening in the Summer months and throughout the first term. Thank you to all parents in our school community for your continued cooperation and support of school procedures and new practices as well as the great care and consideration which continues to be shown in relation to keeping children at home when appropriate to do so.

School Flame Burns Bright!

Prior to school re – opening a number of pictures were shared to the re-opening section of our school website which outlined changes and improvements we had introduced to ensure our school was safe and ready to re-open.

After almost two months back in school it is a pleasure to be able to share images of the wonderful creativity and imagination of our pupils. Images of the brightness and industry of our pupils intersperse this October newsletter. We hope they allow all our families to appreciate the light of the children remains undimmed in Ballyadams N.S.



Admissions Policy

All schools have recently ratified a new Admissions Policy. This policy will apply to enrolment in schools for the 2021/22 School Year and all further years. The policy is available to view in the policies section of our school website on the following link <https://www.ballyadamsns.com/policies.html>.

Enrolment for all new pupils will open on the 14th of January 2021. We welcome all expressions of interest in the weeks and months to come. Please contact Pam in the office or email myself for further information principal.ballyadams@gmail.com. Please encourage family members or those considering enrolling their children in Ballyadams N.S to visit our school website <https://www.ballyadamsns.com/enrolment.html> or follow our school @ballyadamsns on Twitter.



Confirmation

The children from last year's 6th Class and our current 6th Class recently celebrated their Confirmation in Wolfhill Church in four separate ceremonies. The ceremonies while unusual yet deeply meaningful as Fr Dunne remarked in the current climate as the children celebrated this important spiritual milestone in their lives. Thanks to the children for their positivity and readiness on both days. Thanks to Fr Dunne for ensuring the Confirmation was celebrated in a very special and respectful manner. Thanks to all the teachers for helping prepare the children and all families for their attendance and respectfulness of H.S.E guidelines. The Church in Wolfhill looked superb thanks to Helen and Peter. We were very grateful to Christine Kealy for allowing the wider community to be present by streaming the ceremonies live on the Ballyadams Parish Facebook page. Thanks to our own secretary Pamela Cooney for producing the fabulous Confirmation Booklets for all the ceremonies.



First Holy Communion

Sadly our Communion Class were denied the opportunity to celebrate their First Holy Communion in recent weeks due to Phase 3 Covid-19 restrictions. We appreciate how disappointing and frustrating this has been for the children and their families. The First Holy Communion and First Confession will be rescheduled to take place when restrictions are lifted. Bishop Dennis Nulty shared a message for all children who may be disappointed due to this further postponement of the sacraments Please view by accessing the following link *‘Good things are worth waiting for’* here <https://www.facebook.com/KANDLEi/videos/708079083140874> .

Children’s Halloween Walk

We are looking forward to holding our Halloween Walk next Friday the 23d October for the children. The children are encouraged to dress up on the day. Homemade costumes are encouraged but I would like to underline that this is not a competition and there will be no prizes. Sponsorship cards may be returned to the school this week. It will be an opportunity for the children to take part in a whole school fun event in a safe manner. Classes will be separated and safely distanced for the walk. Thanks to our Parents Council who are providing a Halloween treat for all the children. **Unfortunately, due to current restrictions this will be a pupil only event unlike previous years.** A school appointed photographer will be on hand to capture images of our spooky and quirky costumed ghosts and ghouls & pictures will be uploaded Friday to our school website!



GOAL Jersey Day

GOAL Jersey Day took place in school Friday the 9th of October. The children made a tremendous effort to embrace the colour and spirit of the day. Images of Jersey Day will feature in our upcoming School Calendar and if you would like to catch a glimpse of some of the day please see our school Twitter Account @ballyadamsns. Thanks to all families for their generosity in raising over €210 for GOAL. Featured below we have Ms Malone's Junior Infant Class on Jersey Day.



Uniforms and Tracksuits

Please ensure that names are written on all jumpers and clothing as there has been a number of issues with misplaced clothing.

Football Pitch

After the Halloween Break we would ask all our pupils to bring boots / spare footwear to school when accessing the pitches at break times.

Cumann na mBunscol

It is unusual not to be heralding Ballyadams N.S taking part in Cumann na mBunscol Finals at this time of year. All C.M.N.B competitions have been postponed at the present time due to Covid-19. We will keep all our dedicated football, hurling and camogie players informed of any developments in relation to C.M.N.B competitions as the information becomes available to us.

Music Generation

Kim from Music Generation has begun tuition for the children playing Woodwind instruments from 3rd – 6th Class. Taster Classes were provided on the 2nd October and musical instruction takes place each Friday. Lessons will be provided remotely in the event of such a school closure. Payment can be made weekly through the office or through the online payments system.

Contact and Communication

Aladdin Connect is our whole school communication system. The school will continue to contact parents through Aladdin Connect. Thanks to all families for ensuring we have a 100% usage of Aladdin Connect from all families via the Aladdin Connect App. Teachers will contact Parents through Aladdin Connect Noticeboard Messages & the Aladdin Homework Portal. All our teachers are also contactable on their respective teacher school email addresses.

Should you wish to contact your child's teacher you may schedule a phone meeting through Pam in the office. In person meetings in the school may be facilitated at the present time, where necessary, by prior arrangement.

School Procedures

Pods within Class Bubbles will be reconfigured after the Halloween break. The children will be allocated a new Class Pod in 3rd & 4th and 5th & 6th Classes in the new term. Thanks to all the school community and the children for their understanding and cooperation in relation to Class Pods since school re-opening. We will be reconfiguring the makeup of Pods each term or until guidelines are updated / revised to allow for further movement on this subject.

The Board of Management of Ballyadams N.S recently approved altering a number of changes to our daily timetable. We are no longer practicing a staggered small break but rather a whole school small break from 11.00am to 11.10am. This practice allows for greater structure and routine in the school for all classes and children.

The Board of Management also approved a further change in relation to the end of the school day. All classes 1st – 6th now finish at 3pm. Each Class is escorted to the path leading to the Church Car Park by their Class Teacher at home time in an appropriately distanced manner. It is envisaged this change to collection times @3pm will allow for a more efficient pick up routine for all parents and also ensure a safe departure for all our students. We would ask all our families to continue to remain in their vehicles in the car park and depart the Church Car Park promptly at collection time.

Morning supervision begins @9.10am. Please ensure the children are not on school grounds before this time. Thank you for your cooperation.



Going Forward

The Government in yesterday's Phase 5 restrictions announcement have underlined their desire for schools to continue to remain open which is very much welcomed and supported. It is prudent to bear in mind that while we all wish for the children to remain in school this situation could very well change. In the event of another exceptional school closure further steps will need to be taken to ensure appropriate and effective teaching &

learning takes place. The Department Of Education have recently published updated guidance for all schools; ‘Remote Learning in a Covid – 19 Context: September - December 2020’. We as a school are engaging with the updated guidance so as to ensure that the the children will continue to be provided with effective and engaging learning opportunities in the event of a Covid 19 necessitated school closure.

I would like to wish all in our school community a safe and refreshing mid – term break. We hope, pray and have faith that the sacrifices we will all make here & now will allow us to reclaim momentum in the fight against Covid – 19.

Ní neart go cur le chéile

Is mise le meas,

R. Stapleton
Principal