

St. Joseph's Newsletter

December 2014



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Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are having our 'No Uniform Day' on Thursday this week rather than Friday as we have a very, very **special visitor** coming to see all the boys on Thursday....yes, **Santa** is coming on Thursday morning because our boys have been so good all year. He will come to our beautiful grotto which is designed each year by Celine, Shane and Keith's Mom – thank you Celine. And finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy Christmas and hope you all have a healthy New Year. See you all on Monday, Jan 5th, 2015.

Carol service @11am in the Church

Our annual Carol Service is on tomorrow and is always such a lovely occasion. We hope you will be able to join us. Please note that your son should wear his **Royal Blue Uniform**, not his tracksuit, for this special ceremony. All children should return to school after the ceremony. There will be a **cuppa in the Hall for all** parents/guardians supplied by our Parents Council.

If your **son is not attending our Carol Service** we would really appreciate it if he could be **collected from 10.50 for an hour** to allow all staff to attend. However, if you are unable to do so, do not worry, there will be a staff member here with him in *Room 11 with Ms. Doherty*.

Soccer Club Friday: ALL boys who attend Eoghan's 'Shooting Stars' soccer Club will be accommodated on Friday at 12 o'clock for one hour. Please collect him at 1pm promptly

Anti Bullying Week & Policy

Recently, we had our Anti Bullying Week and we kick started it with a Show in the hall for all our boys up to Third Class. The show was called 'Billy the New Kid' and was performed by a drama group called 'E Squared'. Very interactive, engaging show and the boys loved it. They lead a discussion afterwards in which our boys actively engaged. Lots of great work went on throughout the school all week. I hope you got a chance to talk to your son about Bullying. Please explain to him the difference between bullying and a 'once off' unacceptable behaviour. Also, emphasise the importance of not 'standing by' and allowing it to happen should they witness it. If your son is being bullied please let us know so we can help. We cannot help if we do not know what is happening.

A final Draft of this extremely important policy is almost ready to go. We have on our website for your comments and we would appreciate if you could take time to look at it. Your thoughts and opinions would be most appreciated.

Quiz Night Fundraiser

We had a wonderful night in O'Keeffe's recently where our Parents Council organised a Quiz to fundraise for our Astro Turf pitch. They raised a total of €1,095 which has been lodged to the Board of Management account. Thanks to Darren Mooney, a past pupil and runs 'Quick-stitch' in Maynooth, who acted as Quiz Master on the night. Special thanks to all who donated spot prizes and to O'Keeffe's for their generosity too.

Award ceremony in Scoil Dara:

Ms. Fitzsimons attended this ceremony as an honoured guest representing the Irish Womens' Rugby team on Tues 18th in Scoil Dara. She noted a significant number of past pupils were honoured in the top 10 Academic Awards in last year's Leaving Cert. She also informed us that the top Junior and Leaving Cert results were both past pupils of St. Joseph's and what's more, they are brothers, namely Ronan and Enda Smith – well done boys.

PT Meetings on 26th and 27th Nov

Thank you all for attending our recent PT Meetings. If you have not managed to attend the appointment your son's teacher will happily re-schedule a time that is convenient for you. It is important to see your son's teacher(s) and link with them formally about your son's education.

Teachers and parents work in partnership in educating your child. We cannot do it alone – we need your support.

Cór na nÓg

Our boys went up to participate in their first rehearsal with the Girls school and the Irish school last Tuesday, 18th November. Their teachers were absolutely delighted and so proud of our boys and said they sang so sweetly and behaved themselves so well. So, well done to Fourth & Fifth classes and to their teachers Ms. Farrell, Ms. Shiel Nolan and Mrs Divilly.

WSE update

Eighteen months after a Whole School Evaluation each school has a 'Follow Up' visit from DES Inspector. We had ours on Fri 26th September. The Inspector visits classrooms, speaks to teachers, the In School Management team and myself. A Report is drafted and sent to the school and the BOM are reviewing it at their next meeting. The Follow Up visit examines the four recommendations made to every school. We did exceptionally well and the DES are very pleased with St. Joseph's in relation to the true engagement we have made with the recommendations. Special thanks to the Ins School Management team, Eamonn Costello, Carmel Doherty, Bernadine Divilly and Lucy Travers for their input.

Maths Week:

Numerous activities were engaged in during our Maths Week recently. Lots of busy bodies were learning actively while on Maths Trails and games throughout the school. I spotted Senior Infants working with and a senior class on Maths games designed by the older boys. The older boys taught them the game and answered their questions. Well done to all the teachers for their participation and enthusiasm in engaging so actively with this initiative.

Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE)

We have re-scheduled our teaching of the SPHE programme to ensure maximum opportunity to reach most pupils. Sometimes children were missing the lessons as they were on holidays. We now teach the Stay Safe between Hallowe'en to Christmas so watch out for hand-outs over the next few weeks. We will teach Relations and Sexuality Education immediately after Christmas.

Golden Time

We operate a very successful Code of Behaviour that awards children 'stamps' in their Journals and various awards as they progress through their Stamp- book. The boys love the system and are always very clear exactly where they stand and what rule they have specifically chosen to break. As a reward to all our excellent boys we allocate an extra 'Golden Time' to them on a Friday to celebrate just how great they are. This time is taken from Discretionary Time on the Curriculum and not from any teaching time. Boys who reach Stage 4 or more are not allowed engage and must stay indoors. Needless to say, they do not like this but it is unusual to have many boys reach that stage and often only 1 or 2 are denied this opportunity per week.

'Shooting Stars' Club

Eoghan from 'Shooting Stars' was with us again every Wednesday for 6 weeks. Every class attended his sessions and they are very popular with the children and staff. This is paid for by your Classroom Expenses contributions.

Requests: Old board games in good condition etc for After School Club

Dates for your Diary

Christmas Holidays: Fri 19th Dec at 12 o'clock and school re-opens on Mon 5th Jan '15.

Jan 6th: Important Meeting re co-education in Girls School at 8pm.
Please attend

Mid term Break : School closed for one week commencing 16 Feb, 2015.

*Success for all, a happy school –
Learning and growing together*