



January 2024

Charity number: 20116453



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Happy New Year to everyone. We have settled back well after Christmas and there are so many things to look forward to in this busy term, including Internet Safety Week, Wellbeing Week, the 6th Class Bake Sale, Seachtain na Gaeilge and World Book Day. The 2nd and 6th classes also have the Ceremony of Light (6th class) and First Penance (2nd class) to look forward to this term.

Catholic Schools' Week



Last week was Catholic Schools' Week, and the theme was "*Catholic Schools: Communities of Service.*" Fr. Ultan Naughton, the new chaplain of DCU, joined us at assembly to remind us of the gospel values, and how we show respect to all people and embrace all differences. He reminded us that every member of our school offers their service through the unique gifts and talents they have been given,

and the service of every person, regardless of age or role, is of value, and contributes to the characteristic spirit of our school.

During the week, pupils from Ms. Gallagher's 4th class read special prayers over the intercom, and we celebrated Grandparents' Day.



It was a week to reflect on how, in lots of different ways, we are proud of our school ethos.

Grandparents' Day

As part of Catholic Schools' Week, grandparents of 6th class boys were invited into the school for a blessing and some refreshments, kindly provided by the P.A.

Grandparents' Day was an opportunity for all pupils to think about, remember and celebrate grandparents. The boys

had an opportunity to hear about their grandparents' memories. Thanks to the 6th class pupils for sharing art and music on the day, and to the P.A. for all their help with setting up the hall, and providing the lovely refreshments.



Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day takes place on Tuesday 6th of February.

Classes will learn about internet safety, through stories, activities and discussion.

Senior classes have also recently been revising the topic of cyberbullying through the DCU FUSE programme.

On Wednesday 7th, and Thursday 8th of February, 4th-6th classes will have a special workshop by "Cybersafe Kids".

A parent talk by "CyberSafe Kids" will also take place in the school hall on **Thursday, 8th February at 7:30pm**. Please see the link below for more information

[Cybersafe Kids guidelines for parents](#)



The majority of time that children spend on the internet is at home, so it is important that parents and guardians understand the potential dangers and what can be done to avoid them. If your child spends time online, using mobile phones, games,

social media and online streaming, it is essential that they are safe while doing so. We hope to teach the children good habits while they are young, as well as inform parents about the real online dangers for young children and the reality of what they can be exposed to online. We strongly encourage all parents in our school community to attend this Internet Safety talk.



"The February Screen-time Challenge"

While the internet undoubtedly presents fantastic opportunities for children, it is equally clear that there are valid concerns about children spending too much time online, accessing inappropriate content and communicating with people who they do not know. It's important that children learn to respect the online world, and show good, moral behaviour online. It's also important for children to limit their screen-time, through the use of parental settings, or alternative activities.

In February, pupils are encouraged to reduce their screen time by taking part in the "screen time challenge"!

Each pupil from 1st-6th class will receive a grid of activities to engage in as alternatives to screen-time. Thanks to Ms Baxter and her class for thinking of the 29 alternative activities for this challenge! As pupils complete an activity a day (as an alternative to screen time) they can colour in the card. Completed cards, signed by a parent/guardian, can be returned to school and will be entered into a raffle for one of two 25 euro vouchers! We look forward to seeing the completed entries!



Stay Safe

The Stay Safe Programme is being taught this term to the pupils of Junior Infants, 1st class, 3rd class and 5th class. Stay Safe is a personal safety skills programme. The overall aim of the programme is to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying, by teaching the children skills and strategies for dealing with potentially unsafe, threatening or dangerous situations. A Stay Safe Parent Guide with more information was recently sent to parents of those classes on Aladdin. All other classes will also be revisiting "safety" as part of the SPHE programme this term.



FUSE Anti-Bullying programme

The 4th classes will be working on the DCU FUSE Anti-bullying programme in the coming weeks, while 5th and 6th classes will cover the CyberBullying lessons in advance of Internet Safety Day.

RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education)

RSE is an integral part of the SPHE programme. This term, all classes cover the sensitive elements of their class programme, under the strand units "Growing and Changing" and "Taking Care of my Body." A note was sent to parents/guardians on Aladdin with further details.

The 5th and 6th classes will have an RSE talk with an Accord facilitator on Monday the 19th of February, under the guidance of their class teachers. Further details will be shared with the 5th/6th class parents/guardians, and a permission will be set up on Aladdin. More information is also available [Dublin Schools' Programme - Accord, Ireland](#) "Accord" will give an online parent talk ahead, in advance of the pupil talk. This will also help with any queries you may have about the pupil talk, and will take place on Tuesday the **13th of February at 7pm**. A meeting link will be sent to parents in advance.

Wellbeing Week



Wellbeing Week will be taking place after mid-term break, on the week of the 19th of February. We look forward to daily activities that support and inspire being mindful. Thanks in advance to Ms Quinn who will be giving us ideas for Musical Monday, Chuckle Tuesday, Wellbeing Wednesday, Thoughtful Thursday and Fit Friday!

International RAK (Random Acts of Kindness) Day also takes place that week on the 17th of February, which ties in well! The special week will help to remind everyone of the importance of healthy body and healthy mind.

Ethos and Sacraments

Thanks to the Parent Committees who have been helping with the preparation for the sacraments at the Sunday Family Masses in the chapel. Our 6th classes and 2nd classes have attended Family Masses in January and have more scheduled before Confirmation Day and Communion Day.

We extend thanks to Fr. Séamus and Killian O'Higgins of the Family Mass also. We will soon be celebrating the Ceremony of Light

with the 6th class boys on the 5th of March, and First Penance with the 2nd class boys on the 12th of March, two important milestones in the sacramental preparation. Fr. Ultan Naughton, the new chaplain of DCU visited the 2nd class and 6th class pupils recently. While Fr. Ultan takes on the chaplaincy role, Fr. Seamus will continue to celebrate the Sunday masses.



Enrolment 2024

The Parent Talk for new Junior Infants 2024 will take place on Wednesday, 7th of February at 7:30pm.

Applications for a place in the specialised class for pupils with autism for 2024/2025, will be accepted until the 2nd of February 2024.

Applications for a place in a specialised class for pupils with DLD (Developmental Language Disorder) for 2024/2025, will be accepted until the 1st of March 2024. The applications for the DLD class are led by the child's Speech and Language therapist or psychologist.

Attendance Strategy



The school's policy on attendance and its Strategy for Attendance was recently reviewed, and will soon be updated in the school website. A reminder that the school is legally obligated to report to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) any child who misses more than 20 days in the school year. When a child is absent, please record the reasons on Aladdin. An automatic reminder will be sent through Aladdin to notify you when your child has missed 15 days, and to notify you of 20 days absence. Where there is a concern around your child's attendance, you will be contacted by the school.

Punctuality

We place an emphasis on being punctual to school. Our expectation is that pupils arrive between 8:30am and 8:40am for yard gathering time. The bells ring at 8:40am, and pupils are brought to the classroom by their class teachers. Pupils who arrive a few minutes late, (and whose classroom does not have its own external door), should come in the door by Ms. Bassett's office.

Once that door is closed, they should come in the front door at the secretary's office. Lateness is formally recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin when pupils arrive after 9am. Being late for school results in pupils missing out on learning and social experiences, and can impact on the learning time for the rest of the class. While we appreciate there can be reasons for being a little late on occasion, please help ensure this is not a consistent occurrence and that your child arrives on time, organised for the day.



Parental complaints procedure

A new nationally agreed **parental complaints procedure** came into effect on January 1st. It is available on our school website: <https://saintpats.ie/revised-parental-complaints-procedure/>.

Bake Sale

Mr. Moore's and Mr. Carey's 6th classes will be organising the much anticipated 6th class Bake Sale. The Bake Sale is always a big event, and all pupils can support it by buying cakes and/or donating cakes on the morning. Special nut-free stalls will feature for those with allergies. We look forward to

seeing the Bake Sale posters around the school, and on hearing the chosen charity.



Chess Tournament

Once again, our school will be hosting a one day chess tournament in February, run by Féile Fichille. This is a non-competitive, meet-and-greet style chess tournament, and four teams from Mr Moore's 6th class be participating. We look forward to welcoming teams from St. Canice's BNS, Belgrove Senior Girls' N.S., Christ the King Senior Girls' School, St. Joseph's Co-ed primary School and Gardiner Street Primary School.



Credit Union Quiz

Well done to the pupils who tried out for the school quiz team. It was great to see such an interest, and display of general knowledge - they can all be proud of themselves. The following boys attended Round One of the quiz with Mr Duffy and Mr Carey: Louis O'Brien, Ruairí

McCluskey, Tom McLoughlin, Aodhán Rodgers and Alberto Gaidoni. Aidan Farrington, Arturo Gaidoni, Harry Kennedy, Matthew Corbett and Samuel Moore. Well done to the teams for coming 3rd place and 1st place! We brought home the trophy and now go through to Round 2!



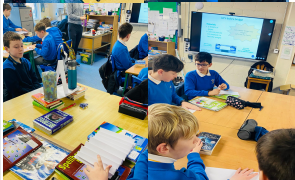
Infants Aistear

Junior infant have been really busy learning all about the work of the vet. They've been busy working together, learning new vocabulary, sorting and classifying!



5th class - Engineering

The two 5th classes are participating in a 5-week engineering initiative on Friday mornings, as part of STEAM (Science, technology engineering, arts and maths). This is being facilitated by a parent of a pupil in Mr Tubridy's class, and his colleague from KLAS, who are delivering the lessons using the 'STEAM Engineering-in-a-box' programme. We are delighted that the pupils have the opportunity to learn all about engineering, and appreciate the effort that has gone into facilitating this. The boys are pictured here making bird feeders, pulleys and paper bridges.



ESB Primary Science Blast

The ESB Primary Science Blast is a non-competitive programme for primary schools, that involves the whole class investigating the science behind simple questions and showcasing their work. This year, Mr. Carey's 6th class will be taking part, by examining how much water we drink in a school day, and reasons why we need to drink more or less. They will be recording their findings, and showcasing their work in the RDS on the 6th of March!



Active Yard

We've been continuing to raise our activity levels as we work towards achieving the Active Flag. Before Christmas, we started a system of organising yard games at break time on the senior yards, and a plan to extend this to the Junior yard. This has been successful, with some tweaks along the way. It is great to see everyone trying out and enjoying the new games together. Thanks to Mr. Skelly, the Active Committee and the 6th class volunteers for helping to set up the activities.

Active School

The Active Flag is a Department of Education and Skills initiative supported by Healthy Ireland and part of the National Physical Activity Plan. The Active School Flag is awarded to schools that strive to achieve a physically educated and physically active school community. We had a special visitor from **Active Schools** this week to see all the work that we have put in to our flag application. The visitor was very impressed with the quality and variety as well as the amount of movement opportunities that the children get. Well done also to the pupils of our Active Schools

Committee who met with our visitor - they were superb ambassadors for the school (and their families)! Thanks also to Mr. Skelly, Ms. Kealy, Ms. Doyle, Mr. Maguire and Ms. Power for helping and being part of the Active School Committee. We await the final report, and hope to be approved the Flag, so we can proudly display it outside the school!



Swimming

As part of the aquatics strand of P.E, 3rd classes and 6th classes have a 6 week course of swimming lessons in Westwood in term three. Further details have been sent on Aladdin to those classes.



Soccer

Trials recently took place for soccer. Thanks to all who attended. All can be proud of themselves, but unfortunately, with such large numbers, not everyone can be on the team. It is encouraging to see such great sportsmanship and behaviour on and off the pitch, as well as great skill and talent. Thanks to Mr. Tubridy and Mr. Ryan, who are giving their time voluntarily to soccer.



Table tennis

Well done to the table tennis team on their recent win against Castleknock in the schools table tennis tournament!



Tin whistle

Thanks to P.A. funding, 3rd-6th classes had an additional 4 weeks of tin whistle classes with Jacqui. While Jacqui's lessons are now almost complete, each class will continue to practice with their class teacher as part of music. It is important to continue to practice the tunes learned to maintain and develop these skills.



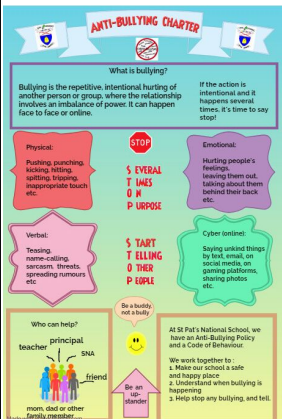
Peace Proms

The pupils in Ms. Baxter's 5th class have been very busy practising various songs and medleys of popular musicals, dance and pop songs. In December, they took a bus to the National Indoor Arena to rehearse singing with thousands of other students from schools all over Dublin and other counties. They continue to work on their songs and dance moves for the main performance which will take place in the RDS Arena this weekend, 3rd of February. We can't wait!



Student Council

The Student Council held meetings with Ms. Bassett and Ms. Quinn, to help review the school's anti-bullying policy. While the Council feels we are generally very good as a school on behaviour, they have been reminding classes about inclusion, fairness and the need to be an upstander. They have working on a school charter for anti-bullying and the design will be published for display in the school and the yard.



ANTI-BULLYING CHARTER

What is bullying?

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.

If the action is intentional and it happens several times, it's time to say stop!

Physical:
Pushing, punching, kicking, hitting, spitting, tripping, inappropriate touch etc.

STOP

SEVERAL TIMES ON PURPOSE

Emotional:
Hurting people's feelings, leaving them out, talking about them behind their back etc.

Verbal:
Teasing, name-calling, sarcasm, threats, spreading rumours etc.

START TELLING OTHER PEOPLE

Cyber (online):
Saying unkind things by text, email, on social media, on gaming platforms, sharing photos etc.

Who can help?
teacher, principal, SNA, friend, mom, dad or other family member

Be a buddy, not a bully

Be an up-stander

At St Pat's National School, we have an Anti-Bullying Policy and a Code of Behaviour.

We work together to:

1. Make our school a safe and happy place
2. Understand when bullying is happening
3. Help stop any bullying, and tell.

The Student Council checked the class suggestion boxes and reported that there was a need to upgrade Active yard equipment. They will discuss this with Mr. Skelly and the Active Committee, and are currently discussing a possible school fundraiser to help raise funds or replenishing the equipment.



Modern Languages in Primary School

Ms. O' Keeffe provided 4 weeks of French lessons to the 6th classes, before taking maternity leave. (She has since welcomed a lovely little baby boy!) There are 4 weeks remaining in the Modern Languages Programme, and a new French teacher will complete these lessons with the pupils over the coming weeks.



School Self Evaluation

As advised previously, our School Self Evaluation is in the area of Wellbeing. We are reflecting on the following areas of the Wellbeing Statement for Schools :

1. The accessibility of our school building for all children and how we accommodate their needs.
2. The availability of our outdoor spaces to facilitate social interactions, physical activity and quiet time.
3. Our inclusivity of all, including those from other cultural backgrounds or with additional needs.

We will soon be sending a survey to parents/guardians and to pupils to help us with our reflection and school development plan.

Maths Curriculum

As advised previously, the Department of Education has published a **new maths curriculum** for all children in primary school. The curriculum sets out what children will learn in maths from next September. More information is available in a variety of languages [here](#). There will be a school closure in term three (Summer term) to facilitate staff training. Once we are advised of the date by the Department of education, we will update you then.

Solar Panels

We are pleased to have been approved to participate in the first round of the Department's solar panels scheme. A detailed application will be made in the coming months. We hope it will help towards keeping electricity costs lower as well as making a positive environmental contribution.

Green School

Thanks to Ms. Gallagher and the Green School Committee, we continue our work towards our next green flag, Global Citizenship, Litter & Waste. The Green School Committee and Ms. Gallagher continue to coordinate the litter picking rotas on the Junior and Senior yard, and we continue to be mindful of energy waste also, ensuring we close doors and turn off lights and devices not in use,



Traffic/parking

A reminder that we are in a "School Zone." In the interest of pupil safety, please be mindful of speed and please abide by traffic & parking rules & restrictions on Milbourne Avenue and on DCU grounds. This includes stopping in the painted "school zone"

A reminder also to maintain respectful interactions with other drivers in pupils' presence.

Pets

We appreciate that pets are important family members, who may be with parents/guardians at drop-off and/or collection time. However, for health and safety reasons we do not allow dogs to come inside the school gates. Unfortunately, our family dogs need to remain outside the gate. Thanks for your help and support with this important matter.

Calendar dates

A reminder that next **Monday, 5th February** is a public bank holiday, and school is closed.

Mid-term break is **Thursday 15th and Friday 16th of February.**

The school will be used as a polling station on **March 8th.** and therefore school will not be open that day.

Board of Management

The Board of Management met on 15th of January. The Child Safeguarding and Anti-bullying oversight reports were provided by the principal. An update was provided on School Self Evaluation and on Ethos. Fr. Ultan Naughton

was welcomed as the new DCU chaplain. The school's electronic banking policy was formally ratified, and the Attendance Policy and Attendance Strategy were reviewed. A Teaching and Learning report was provided by the Principal. School accounts were approved, and an update on the work of the PA was provided. Thanks was extended to the PA for their support. The next meeting takes place on Monday, 12th of February.



P.A.

Special thanks to the P.A. members and 6th class parent volunteers who helped make Grandparents' Day such a special event, by providing refreshments and helping to prepare the hall. The P.A.'s parent/guardian talk on internet safety takes place 8th of February.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,
Natasha Bassett
(Principal)