



*Parteen National School*

*Parteen*

*Co. Clare*

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12/10/17

### School Community Newsletter

#### **Enrolment**

Our Enrolment at the end of September was 355 children. A welcome reduction in the pupil teacher ratio was announced in the budget. The exact figure required to maintain our fourteen mainstream teachers will be issued by Circular from the Department of Education and Skills in January.

#### **Parents Association**

Following the AGM on Tuesday night, Ger Smith and Audrey Dillon will chair the PA jointly, MJ Malone will act as Secretary and Ann Hopwood will act as Treasurer. Suzanne O' Connell, Irene O' Connell, Tara Quinlivan, Sharon Dillon, Nathal Caroll, Pauline Gaffney, Joyce Healy and Ann-Marie Bermingham have been elected onto the Parents Association Committee. Thank you to all the parents for volunteering. The constitution of the Parents Association can be found here: <http://parteenschool.ie/parents-association/>

€671 was raised from the sale of the school calendars. Thank you to all who helped with this project. This money will go towards the operation of the Parents Association e.g. purchase of refreshments, purchase of Easter Eggs.

#### **Buddy Bench**

The school is delighted to announce the Buddy Bench Programme started today during Mental Health Week. According to the RCSI, 1 in 6 young people aged 11-13 experience some kind of a mental health challenge, while high levels of anxiety affect up to 20% of children and young teenagers.

Buddy Bench Ireland is a school-based, child-led positive mental health program that promotes emotional resilience and mental wellbeing, through supporting the core competencies of empathy, creativity, self-awareness and communication.

There are three main elements to the programme: the actual Buddy Bench itself (kindly created by Paul Barry) which is placed on the school grounds, the Buddy Bench Workshops which are

facilitated by a team of psychotherapists and are being delivered throughout the school to all pupils today and the Buddy Bench Workbooks which again are being given to every child.

The Buddy Bench acts as a space where children work out together how to support and accept themselves and each other, in all their uniqueness, diversity and challenges. A child who perhaps might not be having a good day, needs a friend or is just feeling sad can go and sit on the bench independently and their classmates support that child and strive to "be a rainbow in someone's cloud".

The Buddy Bench Workshop plants the seeds of communication, self-awareness and coping skills that enable the children to continue to grow together in mental and emotional wellness.

The Buddy Bench Activity Book is a private vehicle for reflection, creative thinking, self-expression, continuous learning and exploring the language and textures of feelings.

We are excited to be introducing the programme and ask parents to encourage their child to share the principles and practices that they are learning by discussing the activity books with their child when they are sent home. Thank you again to Paul Barry for his work on the bench. Thank you to Ms. Carey who has organised this whole initiative.

### **School Closure**

School will be closed on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> as teachers have to attend training on the Primary Language Curriculum.

### **Magic Show**

Magician Paul Bettie will perform for the children on Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. This will be a special treat for the children.

### **Halloween Dress-Up**

Children and adults can dress up for Halloween on Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. Please bring in €2. Money will go towards paying for the astro-turf pitch.

### **Rugby**

Thank you to Kenneth from Munster Rugby who is currently training 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

### **Football.**

The boys and girls from 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th have been attending the after-school Gaelic football sessions in huge numbers this term. They have been practicing a range of skills including punt kicks, hook kicks, soloing, fist passing, tackling and catching. Each training session ends with a practice game where these skills are put to real use in a very effective way. The 3rd and 4th class boys are being coached by Mr. Collins and Ms. Neylon. The 5th and 6th class boys are being coached by Mr. Hickey and Mr. Crowe. The girls are being coached by Ms. Guckian and Ms. Needham. Thank you to all the coaches.

The 5th and 6th class boys are currently competing in the Cumann na mBunscoil championship. They have so far won 3 of their 4 games - beating Newmarket on Fergus, Kilkishen and Broadford by large scores. They lost to Cratloe N.S. in a very tough game. A final group game, against St. Connaire's N.S., will determine whether or not the team progresses to the County Semi-Final. This will take place in Parteen G.A.A. on Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 11am. The team will depart at 10.30am and return at 12.30pm. Please let us know if you do not want your child to attend. Children are asked to bring in €2 for the bus. Watch this space!

The boys, girls and their coaches would like to sincerely thank Parteen GAA club for their continued support and availability of their pitch and changing-room facilities each week.

### **Choir**

Well done to the choir who performed in University of Limerick Concert Hall recently. Thank you to Ms. Parkinson and Ms. O' Keefe for organising this event and the practices.

### **Edward Lynch**

For the past fortnight the Edward Lynch project (based on the life of a WW1 soldier from Cork), undertaken by last year's 6th Class, has been on display at an exhibition on Military History in Limerick City Hall. The children's research work and presentation skills has been praised by historians, former soldiers and military experts. We hope that the children's love for history will continue to grow as they start the next chapter of their lives in secondary school. Thank you to Mr. Crowe for organising this project.

### **Hockey**

There will be a hockey blitz on Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> in Corbally United. Please send in a note if you do not want your child to attend. Children will leave the school at 9am and will be back at 12 noon. The matches will take place between 9.30am and 11.30am. Children are asked to bring in €2 towards the bus. Thank you to Ms. O' Donovan and Ms. Ryan for organising this and the training.

### **Uniform**

The vast majority of parents are sending their children in with the correct uniform. The policy can be found here: <http://parteenschool.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Uniform-Policy.pdf>. This policy took considerable time to develop – there was a parental survey and all views were taken on board. The policy accommodates those who want to purchase a uniform which has a crest on it as well as those who want to buy a generic uniform. One of the most significant issues that came up was that children should not come to school in branded tracksuit bottoms. **It is unfair to other parents and children if you send your child to school in branded clothes that are not in the uniform policy.** Please review the policy and check that you have the correct items. We will purchase some spares for children who may not have the correct uniform on a given day. We appreciate there will always be occasions where parents may not be able to send in children in the correct uniform, but these should be the exception rather than the norm.

### **Whole School Evaluation**

We had a Whole School Evaluation in March 2015. In May 2017 we had a 'Follow-through Inspection to review how we were implementing the recommendations of the initial evaluation. Well done to the school community on the excellent report. They are both available in the 'About Us' Section of the website.

### **Healthy Eating Policy**

We are currently reviewing the Healthy Eating Policy in the school. We will be consulting with all families about this soon.

Kind regards,

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Gerard Ruane

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Mairéad Guckian