

## **Scoil Inse Rátha**

### **Déan do Dhícheall**

#### **Newsletter November 2024**

##### **Dear Parents,**

November has flown by. We have had a number of visitors to our school this month and they all have been full of praise for our wonderful students. We can be very proud of our school community. This month showed many of the elements that make us special. Children, staff, parents and wider community working together to achieve what wouldn't be possible on our own. Thank you for the part you played this month!

##### **Visit of Children's Ombudsman:**

Over the last ten years our school have been working in partnership with CYPSC (Children and Young Persons Services Committee, [www.cypsc.ie](http://www.cypsc.ie)). Our work led to a series of Supporting Parents Guides for children of various ages. These can be accessed on CYPSC's Cork webpage. In recent years Ms. Hennessy has been working with CYPSC to encourage greater child participation in decisions. They have been looking at age-appropriate ways to let children have a say in decisions that impact them. This doesn't allow adults to abdicate their responsibilities but it allows children to feel greater ownership of their lives. In our school we encourage children to ask questions and to look for opportunities to make our school a better place for everyone. For World Children's Day CYPSC arranged for Dr. Niall Muldoon, The Ombudsman for Children to visit our school. Ms. Hennessy coordinated with the children to arrange this. We helped the children to prepare but they organised and ran the day from start to finish. Each class presented something. Infants showed how they play, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> showed our school as it is, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> showed their ideal school and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> had a Q&A session with the Ombudsman. We are incredibly proud of what our students achieved on the day. Well done to all involved!

##### **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Little Island Sports Complex:**

The Complex is 30 years old this year and a lovely ceremony was held to mark the occasion. There is great credit due to the visionary people who set it up. Little Island has a focal point for community activity and it continues to go from strength to strength thanks to the committee and especially Charlotte. It is an amazing resource for our school and our students. We were delighted to attend the celebrations and to contribute to the time capsule that will be opened in 30 years. I'm not sure I'll still be around but some of our pupils may have their own children reading what their parents wrote and submitted!

##### **Parent/Teacher Meetings:**

Thank you to all the parents who made the effort to attend their child's PT Meeting. There is invaluable information gained by our teachers to help educate your child during these meetings. Communication between home and school doesn't end there. Our teachers are available to meet at any time during the school year if you want to follow up and get an update on your child's progress. If there are day to day issues, feel free to write a note in your child's journal or to call the office. The office is open Mon to Thurs 8.50am to 1.40pm and until 12.40pm on Fridays. Outside of these hours leave a message and we will get back to you.

### **Safe Routes to School:**

We had a visit from the coordinator of this programme during the week. He came to observe how traffic and children access the school in the mornings. The information requested in the survey is essential to help them formulate a clear plan to help all of our children enter and leave the school safely each day. I really need everyone to respond to the survey so we can have accurate information. This is for your child so please fill it in. If you didn't get the survey or can't find it, please email Jacinta on [info@littleislandns.com](mailto:info@littleislandns.com). Other schools will skip ahead of us if our parents don't show an interest in this project which will make our school a safer place.

### **Weather Warnings:**

We have had a couple of weather warnings recently so I wanted to let you know how we decide whether to open or close and how we will communicate with you. The school year is short enough so we will be open unless absolutely necessary.

Red Warning: school will be closed if this is likely during school hours. Generally, this is a clear-cut decision and once you hear that our area is to be under a Red Warning you can plan on the school being closed.

Orange warning: there are a number of factors that I have to consider, similar to last Thursday's alert. Can I get enough staff to school to adequately supervise the children? Is it safe to ask the majority of children/staff to travel to school? Once they arrive at school is it likely to be safe for everyone to get home again? Our Board of Management have a duty of care to staff and students and we take this seriously. However, we are very much aware that several parents will still have to go to work and that we are part of day-to-day childcare arrangements. It is an onerous decision-making process with often imperfect information available. Normally I will come to school early to check to see if travel is possible and will let you know then. All too often making a decision the night before isn't the best way to proceed. I can understand that this is inconvenient but it gives us the best chance of opening.

Yellow Warning: school will be open and we will take necessary precautions such as keeping the children inside if conditions warrant it.

Information will be communicated via Instagram to keep you updated and a text will be sent out if we are closing.

Even if school is open, each adult has to make an informed decision based on their own circumstances. If it is not safe to travel from where you are then don't travel until it is safe to do so. School attendance is very important but it isn't worth risking an accident for.

### **Parents Association:**

Our PA have been very busy in the last few weeks. Our annual calendar is available for sale now at €10 each. A huge amount of work has gone into getting all the photos together from the volunteers on our PA. Thank you to everyone who helped out and made it possible. It is a lovely keepsake and every house should have one! We will have our annual raffle on December 19<sup>th</sup> and tickets will go on sale next week. We appreciate that this is an expensive time of the year and we are very grateful for your continued support. School funding is a constant battle and we are always having to beg and borrow to keep the doors open. Your support is essential – thank you!

### **Solar Panels:**

We have been approved to get solar panels installed on the roof of our school. Provided our roof and electricity infrastructure is suitable we hope to have these in place by the summer. It will allow us to save on our electricity costs and to make some money by selling electricity back to the grid when we don't use it during the summer and other holiday periods. We are only at the tendering stage so far but keep an eye on Instagram and future newsletters for more information and updates.

#### **Cork Pops:**

3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> went The City Hall last week to see The Cork Pops show. They were treated to an amazing morning of music by the Cork Pops Orchestra. Our children were excellent and impeccably behaved as always!

#### **Basketball:**

5<sup>th</sup>&6<sup>th</sup> have completed their basketball programme with Mark now. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>&4<sup>th</sup> are next up starting on Friday Dec 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Cork Soccer Squad:**

Congratulations to Lara Yaakoubi who has been selected for the Cork soccer squad. This is recognition of her dedication and skill and we are very proud of her. It is also recognition of the excellent work the coaches in Leaside AFC are doing in developing players from a young age. We wish Lara well in her games and hope that she enjoys the whole experience.

#### **Christmas Performances:**

Our Christmas performances will take place this year on December 17<sup>th</sup> at the following times: 9am Junior Infants; 9.45am Senior Infants; 10.45am 1<sup>st</sup> class; 11.30am 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, 12.15pm 3<sup>rd</sup>&4<sup>th</sup> and 1pm 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes. These will take place in Rooms 10&11 which you can access from the pitch side of the school. We will have to stick to these times so please be on time!

#### **Extra-Curricular Activities:**

Ready, Set, Fun is up and running again two days a week. Chess is also running two days a week. These activities provide our students with some alternative activities outside of school hours and help them to develop in different ways.

#### **Christmas Traditions:**

Christmas means different things to different people. Many families want to enjoy the magic and wonder of Christmas for as long as possible, other families don't and some of our families don't celebrate Christmas at all. I would ask that you speak to your child to make sure they don't do or say anything to take away from someone else's experience of this time of year.

#### **Christmas Presents for staff:**

At our most recent staff meeting we discussed the pressure that parents can feel to get presents for staff. In some cases, there can be several adults involved with a child and this can make it very expensive for families at an already expensive time of year. We understand the importance of teaching children to say thank you. Firstly, there is no need to say thank you as we love working with the fantastic children in our school. If you do want to say thank you, a card or a note is always welcome and appreciated.

That's all for now.

All the best,

Micheál Rea

**Up Coming Events:**

**Friday November 29<sup>th</sup>:** school closed for voting

**December 17<sup>th</sup>:** Christmas Performances

**December 19<sup>th</sup>:** PA Christmas Raffle

**December 20<sup>th</sup>:** school closes at 12.15pm for Christmas Holidays

**Jan 6<sup>th</sup>:** school closed for staff in-service: Sherpa should be open on this date – email [lins@sherpakids.ie](mailto:lins@sherpakids.ie) for details.

**Jan 7<sup>th</sup>:** school reopens after the Christmas Holidays.

**Jan 8<sup>th</sup>:** swimming starts for 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> classes – full details to follow