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# September Newsletter 2020



Firstly I would like to welcome all our pupils, parents and members of staff back to St. Patrick's N.S. After what has been a very unusual and difficult time, it was fantastic to welcome all our pupils back to school on Monday morning last. I would like to thank everyone in the school community for their efforts to make sure that we could reopen the school safely. As you are well aware at this point, we have had to make many changes to how the school normally operates particularly at morning drop off and evening collection. I would like to thank all our parents for their cooperation with implementing these changes.

As you would expect our pupils have adapted really well to the changes during the school day. They really understand the importance of good respiratory hygiene, hand washing and sanitising. They have settled into their pods and bubbles really well and have adapted to the different break times.

Our staff has also really worked hard during the summer to ensure that the school is ready for reopening. I would like to thank all our teachers and SNAs for their cooperation, flexibility and hardwork in recent weeks. I would especially like to thank Gerard Sexton, our caretaker/cleaner, who has worked tirelessly to ensure that our school grounds are as safe as possible for everyone in the school community. Thank you Ger.

It is important that everyone continues to adhere to the guidelines over the coming weeks and months so that our school can remain open and we can make our school environment as safe as possible for everyone.

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## **Our Staff:**

Gerard Sexton – Caretaker/Cleaner

Paula O'Grady – Special Needs Assistant

Eileen O'Connell – Special Needs Assistant

Frances Killeen – Special Needs Assistant

Claire English- Special Needs Assistant

Fiona Walsh – Support Teacher

Margaret Irwin- Support Teacher

Karen Conmy- Junior Infant teacher

Anna O’Dea – Senior Infant teacher

Jean Hannon- 1st class teacher

Shauna Dillon- 2nd class teacher

Karen Murnane- 3rd class teacher

Catherine Hynes- 4th class teacher/Vice Principal

David Reidy- 5th class teacher

Tom Goggin- 6th class teacher

Ger Kelleher- Principal

We would like to welcome Tom Goggin and Claire English to our staff this year. We would also like to welcome Anna O’Dea, David Reidy and Shauna Dillon back to Bruree NS. We would like to wish Rósín Cussen and Nicola Costelloe best wishes at a very exciting time for them both.

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I wish to draw your attention to the following items. They are important and will help in the smooth running and order of your child’s school life.



### **Communication:**

Obviously with COVID-19 restrictions currently in place, visitors have very limited access to the school. If parents need to contact their child’s class teacher please use the email address provided in our previous newsletter. The class teacher will respond by email or by phone call, whatever is appropriate. **We do ask that emails are sent to teachers between 8.45 am in the morning and 5.30pm in the evening.** If your child is going to be late due to an appointment or if they have to attend an appointment during the day an email to the class teacher will suffice.

The school uses a “**Text-a Parent**” service to communicate efficiently with all in the school community. We will be using this service regularly during the school year. To operate this system effectively we need your most **up-to-date** number, please. We do not share these numbers with any third party for any reason. If you have changed your number recently, please provide us with an up to date number by email. As has become the norm in recent months, the school will be using email to send out newsletters such as this one. Again, please provide us with an up to date email address if you have not already done so.

The school also has a twitter account that can be found under the handle [@brureens](https://twitter.com/brureens). We regularly post updates on daily life in the school here and it is a great way for parents to get a snapshot of what is happening in the school.

The school also has a website that can be accessed on <https://www.brureens.ie/> This website has been updated recently and contains all the useful information that parents will need. It will be updated regularly with news and items about daily

life in the school. I would like to thank Chris Culhane for all his help with the site. We hope that you enjoy visiting it in the weeks and months ahead.

The school will also distribute a newsletter for parents on a regular basis during the school year. As mentioned above, these will be sent by email and will be available on the school website.

**Parent/Teacher Meeting:** Parent/Teacher meetings normally take place in November. We will decide how these will proceed this year closer to the time.



**Sacraments:** Our 2nd class from last year will celebrate their Communion in small groups on Saturday 12th and 19th September. Parents were notified of the date, time and venue for their child's Communion in August.

**School Reports:** Reports are issued each June to all Parents. We ask that parents send in a Stamped Addressed Envelope in June to facilitate the postage of these reports.

### **Annual Contribution:**

As outlined in your child's booklist in June, we ask for a €30 contribution per child (maximum €100 per family) at the start of the school year. This contribution covers the cost of art and craft supplies and photocopying costs. Monies gathered through this annual contribution will only be used to benefit your child's education and to provide opportunities for your child to access the curriculum fully. We would like to thank parents for their contribution this year as well as for previous years contributions.

We are aware that September is an expensive time for parents. The contribution can be paid in installments up to the Christmas holidays.

**Safety Notice:** The school will open to receive pupils at **8.50 a.m.** **No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time.** Punctuality is expected at all times. Classes will end each day at 2.00 p.m. for Infants and at 3.00 p.m. for classes I – VI. New arrangements are in place this year for drop off and collection times in the car park. I would like to thank parents again for their cooperation with these arrangements,

In the case of children travelling on the school bus, the school cannot accept responsibility for escorting them from the bus to the school or from the school to the bus. Parents who feel that their children need to be escorted on these occasions should make arrangements to ensure escort is provided.

*For the safety of the children travelling on the school bus please allow room for the bus driver to park as close to the side gate as possible.*

*Children who walk/cycle to school should enter through the **front gate**.*



**Homework:** Currently, we are not assigning homework for pupils as they settle back into the routine of school. In the coming weeks, homework will become a routine of the child's day. It is a habit which, if acquired at an early age, will be of huge benefit to him/her at a later stage. We ask parents to ensure that what is given is completed neatly. The following is a *general outline*.

Junior Infants: At the teacher's discretion

Senior Infants: 10 – 15 mins

1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Class: 30 – 45 mins

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Class: 1 hr

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class: 1 – 2 hrs

If your child is experiencing problems with homework, please contact the teacher.

### **Parents Association:**

We would like to thank the Parents Association for their hard work last year. We look forward to working with the association this year on a number of different initiatives. The association organised a fundraising raffle at Christmas which was of great benefit to the school. They also helped organise beautiful hoodies for our 6th class pupils last year. This was a special gesture for these pupils as they missed out on the last number of months of primary school and could not have the traditional graduation ceremony that takes place every year.



**Silver Circle Draw:** The school will hold a draw in aid of school funds in November/December. As in the past, proceeds will be used to purchase educational materials, in the upkeep of the school and to enhance the children's educational experience. Over the past year our Silver Circle Draw has provided a variety of resources e.g. new graded and levelled readers, sponsored school outings, new iPads and contributed to the purchase of classroom materials.

Your support for the draw would be very much appreciated. The first draw will take place on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November and will continue every Wednesday for the following four weeks. The subscription is €2 a week for five weeks. A draw card will be issued closer to the mid term break.

### **Dropping off items:**

Please ensure that your child has all the items they need when they are coming to school each morning. In the rare event that you need to drop lunch or another important item, please ring or email the school in advance of coming to the school. A closed plastic box will be placed inside the small side wall of the school and you can drop the forgotten item here. A member of staff will collect it and drop it into your child.

**Savings:** We draw the pupils' attention to the life-long advantages of saving regularly. To facilitate this, we are continuing with the Sammy Stamp Savings scheme this year. Kilmallock Credit Union encourages the children to open accounts with them once they have filled a card.



**Dress Code:** The school uniform is worn on all school days other than on days of PE classes. Research has shown that where schools and children have a proper respect for the uniform and appearance that school life benefits in many ways. This year, we ask that pupils have appropriate clothing for all types of weather as we want them to get out in the fresh air as much as possible. Please ensure that all clothes likely to be removed i.e., hats, scarves jumpers etc. are clearly labelled in bold writing with your child's name on it.

**Health/Safety:** Please check your child's hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice. This is a huge problem nationally. If there is an outbreak of head lice in a class, all parents of pupils in that class are informed by note/text, and are asked to take immediate action to treat infestation.

### **Pupil Personal Insurance.**

In order to cut down on the amount of items travelling between home and school, the application form for Pupil Personal Insurance form can be filled out online this year. [A link for the form will be text to parents and can also be found here.](#) When you submit the form to the school, please send in the appropriate money to the school the following day. The completed form and correct amount of money are required before your child can be entered into the scheme. We strongly

advise parents to enter their children in the scheme. Please see the online application form for more details. The closing date for this scheme is **18/09/2020**.

### **Mobile Phones**



For health reasons, to avoid the possibility of theft and to eliminate one method of bullying, pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones on to the school premises. Mobile phones are not permitted on school outings or trips. If your child needs to contact you during the school day this can be done through the office. On the very rare occasions that your child may require a mobile phone for some reason after school, your child's mobile phone will be stored under lock and key in the principal's office and will be returned at the end of the school day. If a pupil is found in possession of a mobile phone during the school day, the pupil's parents will have to come into the school in order for the phone to be returned. We ask that these guidelines are strictly adhered to during the school year in order to avoid more serious issues which can occur around the use of mobile phones.

**Healthy Eating:** We encourage children to bring healthy lunches and snacks to school. All of us are well aware of the effects of fizzy drinks, crisps etc., have on the children's health and wellbeing. The pupils have a fruit break at 10.00a.m. each morning.

### **Attendance:**



The school is using the Aladdin school management system at present. This system automatically texts parents when your child misses 10,15 and 20 days. The school is obliged to report to TUSLA (Child & Family Agency) when a pupil misses 20 days in a school year. If you wish to discuss your child's attendance, please make an appointment through the school office.

When your child does miss a school day please send an email to the class teacher when he/she returns. This email will be a record of your child's absence and can be printed in school if needed. A phone call explaining an absence is not necessary.

Where possible, appointments should be made for after school time. Pupils leaving school early on a regular basis do end up missing a lot of teaching time during the school year and this should be minimised where possible.

### **Active School Flag:**



As you are aware, the school was awarded its first Active Flag last year. . The initiative has been a great success with the pupils taking part in many different activities last year. It has also given our staff an opportunity to review physical education in the school. We will continue with all our hard work in this area this year. PE is a primary focus for schools since our return and we will be continuing to encourage our pupils to be as active as possible in school and at home. I would like to thank the teachers, pupils and in particular our Active School Flag Committee for all their hard work and dedication with this initiative.

### **Nut allergies.**

There are pupils in our school who suffer from nut allergies. We ask that pupils **do not** bring nuts to school as part of their lunch.



## School Calendar:

A copy of the school calendar has been attached to this newsletter.

| <b>Term 1</b>           |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>August</b>           | School reopens on 31/08/2020   |
| <b>October/November</b> | Mid- term break: Monday 26th Oct to Friday 30th October  |
| <b>December</b>         | Christmas Holidays: School will close at 12.30pm on Tuesday 22nd December.                               |
| <b>Term 2</b>           |  |
| <b>January</b>          | School opens Monday 6th January 2020   |
| <b>February</b>         | Mid-term break: Thursday 18th and Friday 19th February   |
| <b>March</b>            | Public Holidays: Wednesday 17th March  |
| <b>March/April</b>      | Easter Holidays: School will close at 12.30 p.m. on Friday 26th March.<br>School will open on 12th April |
| <b>Term 3</b>           |  |
| <b>May</b>              | Public Holiday: Monday 3rd May   |
| <b>June</b>             | Public Holiday: Monday 7th June<br>Summer Holidays: Schools will close 12.30 on Wed 23rd of June.        |



## Extra Curricular Activities

At the moment, we are very much concentrating on reopening the school and spending time establishing new routines for our pupils and staff. We take great pride in St. Patrick's N.S. in providing a broad range of extra curricular activities every year. We will continue to monitor guidance in relation to Covid-19 and when it is possible and safe to do so we will reintroduce some of the activities that everyone in our school community enjoys.

All in the school community here in St. Patrick's N.S., are looking forward to the new school year. We look forward to working in partnership with the parents and all in the Bruree community this year to ensure that the pupils in the school achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Your support and cooperation in the past is appreciated and we all look forward to a happy and productive year for all the children in the school.

Regards,  
Ger Kelleher,  
Principal  
06390896



[office@brureens.ie](mailto:office@brureens.ie)  
[www.brureens.ie](http://www.brureens.ie)