

Piercestown Post October 2019

Welcome to the October edition of our newsletter and well done to all of the boys and girls on completing their first half term! We hope you have a spooktacular Halloween!!! October certainly was an exciting month in school – read below and see for yourselves!



Maths Week - 14th to 18th October

Maths Week is always an exciting and fun-filled learning event for all and this year was no exception! Our budding mathematicians enjoyed a wide variety of activities, from old favourites such as Tables Bee Champion and Countdown, to new activities such as Make 4. Each class had their own session of in-class maths activities throughout the week which included Tangrams, Pentominoes, Connect 4, Marble Run, Card games, Snakes and Ladders and much more. Many thanks to our parent volunteers who came in to assist us each day. We had competitions galore also - guess the weight of the pumpkin, guess how many jelly beans are in the jar and solve the problem of the day. In keeping with tradition the week finished off on Friday 18th with a Monster Maths Quiz. The lucky prize winners of the various different competitions will be announced this coming Friday at a prize giving ceremony. Congratulations to our Tables Bee champions -John Kenny and Rianna Gooden, our Countdown champion - Zakk Casey and the winning Monster Maths Quiz teams who will also receive their prizes on that day. Special word of recognition goes to Sam Scallan who was unlucky not to win the Tables bee or the Countdown competition. Keep an eye on the school blog for photos and videos of Maths Week 2019!

Goal Jersey Day

The staff and pupils of Piercestown N.S. donned their favourite jerseys on Friday 11th October to raise money for GOAL. Over €350 was collected to help people in need. Thanks to everyone who generously supported this worthwhile charity event. For more information or to make a donation see goalglobal.org.

Sports Update

As October rolled by our investment in the Gaelic football season intensified. Despite spirited performances both the girls and boys mini-7s teams were knocked out in the second round. The girls lost out to very strong Mercy and Kilmore sides. The boys won their first match against Crossabeg but despite a very spirited performance they came up just short against a talented Glynn side losing on a scoreline of 3-2 to 1-4. The boys and girls did their school proud in this competition and we will go again when we switch to the small ball next April. Our girls Rackard League football team qualified to the 'B' quarter final where they showed a huge improvement to overcome Bunclody on a scoreline of 7-7 to 3-3. Having defeated Cushinstown, Rathangan, Ramsgrange and Horeswood, the boys remain undefeated heading into their quarter final of the 'A' competition where they face Bree today. Fingers crossed for the boys securing a semi-final place post midterm. Our Rising Stars teams have progressed along well during the group stages and can look forward to the knockout stages of this competition after Halloween. Our lunchtime league football competition is nearing the end of the group stages and the semi-finals will take place after midterm.

Piercestown N.S. to begin to DREAMM!!!!

Piercestown N.S. joined forces with 4 other schools, Mayglass, Our Lady's Island, Tagoat and Curracloe in an application for a 'Creative Cluster' at the end of 2019. The application was successful and so the 'DREAMM' has started. This creative cluster looks at embracing the arts, specifically that of music and song singing. 'DREAMM' – DRop Everything and Make Music, looks at enhancing both teacher and pupil wellbeing by increasing confidence for all in the area of song singing and looks at further developing creativity and critical thinking. There is an abundance of research to verify that music enhances our concentration, working memory and language processing.

As a result of our successful application and participation in the project, the school has been awarded €1000 to spend on the project. The project is being led by Ms. Lorna Farrell, supported by all our staff. Over the coming months, we will keep you updated on the website and in the newsletter of our progress. There is strong evidence of song singing already on the increase throughout the corridors of Piercestown N.S. and word has it assemblies will be taking a creative turn in the near future!

Beginning of Year Mass

On Wednesday 2nd October pupils, staff, parents and members of the community all gathered together in the church to celebrate the beginning of another school year here in Piercestown N.S. This was an opportunity for our new pupils to be officially welcomed in a spiritual way and for those of us already in the school to enjoy some quiet, mindful time out of the busy classroom setting. A special welcome was offered to the new Junior infants, the

children in Miss Sinnott's class, new members of our staff and new parents in our school community. It was a lovely child-centred ceremony led by Fr. O'Reilly. The children from Junior and Senior Infants and 1st class sang on the altar while 2nd class pupils brought up symbols representing aspects of school life. The senior classes were involved in the readings and the school choir, made up of children from 3rd to 6th class, sang beautifully on the day. Many thanks to Miss Sinnott for the wonderful choir and to Fr. O'Reilly for this celebration mass.

Paddy Madden brings Autumn to life

Both staff and children were looking forward to welcoming Mr. Paddy Madden, the school gardener, on Friday 11th October and they were not disappointed. Each class was treated to a nature workshop centred around the theme of Autumn. Mr. Madden brought many interesting things for the children to see and touch, including samples of autumn fruits, nuts, berries, leaves and bulbs such as hyacinth and white daffodil. He also had hibernation boxes that he had made for bees and ladybirds. He spoke to the children about hibernation, migration and the various different forms of seed dispersal. He also suggested one good way of tackling climate change - plant a tree! Be sure to have a look at the school blog to see what they got up to!

Chess

Dust off the chessboards and get playing! Our in-school chess competition starts shortly. Who will be crowned this year's champion? Only time will tell. And remember, *"Every chess master was once a beginner."* – Irving Chernev.

Camogie Champions

Staff and students donned the St. Martin's colours to welcome our three in a row camogie champions to Piercestown N.S. The children listened enthusiastically to words of wisdom from team captain Marie-Claire Morrissey and goal keeper Mags Darcy. The biggest cheer of all was reserved for Lauren Carty as she announced no homework that night to celebrate their victory. We wish the girls the best of luck on their journey and we'll be with them every step of the way. Here's hoping for their return in March as All Ireland Club Champions. All roads lead to Wexford Park this weekend as the men's senior hurling team take on local rivals St. Anne's in the County final!

Student Council to be created!

BIG NEWS!!! Piercestown NS is delighted to announce the introduction of its very first Student Council! Candidates from 3rd to 6th class will put themselves forward in the coming weeks and the election will take place on Friday 14th November. Good luck to them as they set out on their election campaign. Watch out on the blog and the newsletter for further updates.

Parent Teacher Meetings 2019 - dates for your dairies Nov. 26th and 28th

Following consultation with staff, it has been decided to revert to the earlier time of the year for our parent teacher meetings. **The two selected dates are Nov 26th and Nov 28th. School will close at the earlier time of 2.45pm** to facilitate set up for the meetings. Immediately, following the mid term break appointment times will be allocated. As always, we do our best to facilitate all parent requests and try to co-ordinate sibling Parent teacher meetings etc. Ms. Walsh is also available on the day should anybody wish to discuss any concerns. We look forward to meeting you all.

Acknowledgement and appreciations of outgoing PA committee

Parent Association AGM took place on October 2nd. As per the agenda of an AGM, a report on the activities in the previous year was given by chairperson and the treasurer of the Parents' Association. Ms. Walsh was also on hand to discuss the importance of 'working together' and all the successes in the previous school year as a result of the brilliant partnership. As with all AGM's, the election of officers took place. After two years commitment and great innovation and ideas, Chairperson Martina Crosbie and Vice chairperson Karen McCluskey stepped down. They were followed by Nichola Collier in her role as Treasurer and Jenny Cullen in her role as secretary. On behalf of the Board of Management, and the staff, I wish to offer all four officers a HUGE thank you for all their commitment and hard work over the last number of years. I would also like to thank all committee members past and present also, for fear of naming people and leaving somebody out. Following the election for the new committee, the following officers were appointed – Chairperson, Amanda Whitmore, Secretary- Gillian O'Brien and Treasurer Suzanne Connolly. As always, every parent is included in the Parent Association membership and we look forward to working with the new officers and committee in the year ahead.

Enrolment for the Sacraments Mass / St. Martin's Mass Sunday 10th Nov.

Children from 2nd and 6th class will formally begin their journey of preparation for the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation as they gather together with the parish for their enrolment mass on Sunday 10th November. This is an opportunity for the children to publicly share their commitment with the parish. The ceremony will include recognition and appreciation of St. Martin, the patron Saint of our Church. We look forward to sharing this special occasion with the Communion and Confirmation candidates.

Board of Management 2019-2023 – Are you interested in joining our Board of Management 2019-2023?

The new governance manual for the election of the Board of Management 2019-2023 went live at the end of September. Please find attached to this newsletter the guidelines for the election process of the parent nominees. Over the coming weeks, a teacher nominee, and patron's nominee will be appointed. Following the election of the parent nominees, a meeting of the six newest Board members will take place. At this stage, the final two community nominees will be elected. The current Board of management officially ends on November 30th with the newest Board being in situ for December 1st. For further information please go to <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Boards-of-Management/governance-manual-for-primary-schools-2019-2023.pdf>

Acknowledgement and appreciation of the Board of Management 2015-2019

As the current board comes to an end, I wish to offer a heartfelt thanks to all who have served on the Board of Management 2015-2019, over the four year duration. Ms. Sinéad Lyttleton occupied the teacher nominee role for the majority of the lifespan of the board, followed by Ms Julie Sinnott who took up this new role following Ms. Lyttleton's maternity leave. Special thanks to John Price our community member who occupied 3 of the 4 years followed by George O'Connor who took up the remaining duration when John stepped down. Huge credit to Breda Murphy the patron's nominee and Bríd Quigley community nominee. They have served now under two principals and their contribution to the running of Piercestown N.S has been immense. Thank you to Gráinne Power and Keith Cullen who occupied the parent nominee positions and gave of their time to so willingly. Thank you to Fr. O'Reilly who continues to occupy the role of Chair and does so with the utmost dignity and dedication to all in our school. All the members of a Board of Management work for the school and with the school in a voluntary capacity to ensure decision making operates at an optimum level, always for the good of the children and the good of the school community. We offer you congratulations on a job well done and heartfelt thanks for all you have given us. This Board has overseen policy development, change of personnel, upgrading of bathrooms, development of tranquillity spaces indoor and outdoor, the opening of our special class for children with Autism and so much more. We hope you enjoyed your time with us and look forward to keeping good links with you all. Míle buíochas.

Freaky Friday – Get into the Halloween 'spirit'!

Calling all goblins and ghouls, witches and werewolves, vampires and zombies! Meeting of the UNDEAD at the St. Martin's centre tomorrow morning from 9:10 for our spooktacular Freaky Friday march. Remember - prizes for best costume in each class!

A Word from the Principal

As we make our way towards the midterm break, I would like to congratulate the school community on a very successful half term. Our newest school members have taken to Piercestown N.S. like ducks to water, as have our newest members of staff. On a personal and professional level, I would like to follow the Board of Management's acknowledgment and appreciation of the outgoing officers of the Parents' Association and extend a heartfelt thanks to Martina, Karen, Jenny and Nicola. It has been a hectic few years and the commitment and dedication shown by you all is to be commended. On a personal level, it was a pleasure to work with you and I look forward to keeping in touch. I also, take this opportunity to thank all members of the Board of Management 2015-2019. Without you, I could not bring many of our newest ventures over the past four years to fruition. You have been amazing, Take a bow! I look forward to working with the new PA officers, Amanda, Suzanne and Gillian and wish you the best of luck in your new roles. I also look forward to working with the new Board of Management following the election processes. And while we say goodbye to our outgoing officers and Board of Management, we look forward to

welcoming back Ms Sinéad Lyttleton as she returns from her maternity leave following the midterm break. Happy Halloween everyone!

Here are some dates for your diaries:

- **Science Week – 11th to 18th November 2019**
- **Sing Out Loud 11th Nov. 2019**
- **Parent Teacher meeting dates 26th and 28th Nov. 2019**
- **5th class visit Teagasc – Thursday 15th November**
- **St. Martin's Mass Sunday 10th Nov. 10am** Enrolment mass for Holy Communion class and Confirmation class
- **Image Masters** (school photos) – Wednesday 13th November (new infants and their siblings and group pictures)
- **Fri 22nd Nov. MMR 4-in-1 vaccinations**