



Welcome to the first edition of the Piercestown Post for the new school year 2019-2020! This beginning of school year newsletter reminds us of the 'housekeeping' procedures at Piercestown National School and if you are a new parent, it may indeed answer some questions that you might have. However, should your question not be answered, please do not hesitate to ring the school and we will be sure to help you. We hope that you all had an enjoyable summer and we look forward to an exciting and productive year ahead.

Welcome Back!

Welcome back to all the boys and girls. We hope you had a great summer and enjoyed all the lovely sunshine. We have a new school year ahead with lots of new learning activities already in the pipeline. We wish you an enjoyable and successful year with us. Best of luck to our new role models – 6th class, as they begin their last year of primary school. I'm sure they'll make us proud, showing good example to all the younger pupils.

What happened during Summer 2019

We hope that lots of fun and relaxation was had by all our staff and pupils over the summer break. But like in any good organisation, there is always something going on behind the scenes. Summer 2019 was no different. This year saw the bell being upgraded and an intercom system being installed. The children are enjoying their new signal for breaktimes and we look forward to making the best use of our intercom as the year progresses. Following on from the fantastic news that Piercestown National School had now been sanctioned to open a special class, we looked to ensuring that the most inviting accommodation was in place for our newest school members. A lot of work took place in ensuring it was ready just in time. The new classroom nests snugly between our Tranquillity room and Tranquillity outdoor space and feels like it was always there! Unfortunately, due to ongoing anti-social behaviour further CCTV upgrades had to take place to protect our school.

Special welcome to our new pupils

A special word of welcome to all our new pupils. 29 new Junior Infant pupils started school this year and are already getting settled in. We welcome Ayda, Síne, Jamie, Amelia, Aaron, Amy, Mae, Jack, Cara, Levi, Amara, Ashton, Niamh, Saoirse, Tess, Myah, Ruth, Tom, Lorna, Zoe, Polly, Maeve, Francis, Oisín, Holly, Maddison, Eoin, Kayla and Callum. As well as our new junior infants we also welcome another new class of children. Miss Sinnott, Fiona and Bryan are delighted to welcome Toddy, Rian, Kiefer, Lauryn, Harry and Callum to Piercestown N.S. Miss Sinnott's class will be getting a special name in the coming weeks so watch this space. We hope you all settle in at Piercestown N.S. and enjoy many happy school years with us. The staff at Piercestown N.S. would also like to take this opportunity to send their best wishes to 6th class of 2018-2019 as they begin their journey in secondary school.

Welcome our new staff

We welcome back Ms. Tracey Rea who is currently teaching Senior Infants. A very warm welcome to Miss Lorna Farrell who has joined us as a permanent member of staff and is teaching 5th class. We also welcome Shelly Roche and Niamh Whelan who have joined us as permanent members of our SNA team. We also welcome Teresa Roche Murphy who is working as part of our SNA team over the coming months also. We are delighted to have them on board and look forward to working with them throughout the coming year. We thank you for your co-operation and understanding as pre employment checks and procedures were adhered to during the summer months.

Housekeeping Notes for a New School Year

Supervision before and after school

The school yard will be supervised from 9.10am-9.20am in the morning. For the purposes of health and safety of all children, parents are asked to remind their children that they are only permitted on the grounds in front of the school during this time (no children are allowed around the sides or the back of the school during this time with the exception of those parking their bicycle at the bicycle rack). Doors will be opened at 9.20am.

School finishes at 3.00pm each day. **The school yard will be supervised from 3.00pm-3.10pm in the afternoon.** Parents who wish to have their children escorted home should make arrangements to meet them at the gate and the person to escort them should be at the school no later than 3.00pm. For the purposes of health and safety of all children, parents are asked to remind their children that they are only permitted on the grounds in front of the school during this time (no children are allowed around the sides or the back of the school during this time with the

exception of those collecting their bicycle at the bicycle rack) **After 3.10pm the school cannot accept responsibility for children on the grounds** unless they are engaged in an extra-curricular activity approved by the school.

Morning Lines

To ensure safe entry for everyone into the school building, all children from 1st- 6th classes line up each morning at 9:20 when the bell rings. The door is opened allowing Junior Infants, Senior Infants and Miss Sinnott's class and their parents/guardians to enter safely and without crowding. Class teachers come out to collect their line and escort them in. **On rainy days, the doors will be opened at 9.10am and children from 1st- 6th will line up in the P.E. hall while Junior and Senior Infants and their parents/guardians wait in the reception area until the bell rings. Miss Sinnott's classroom will be open on a rainy day from 9.10am.** Many thanks for your co-operation with these practices. The health and safety of our children is paramount.

Sunny Days - before and after school care

Sunny Days Breakfast Club and After School Club are still taking bookings for the school year 2019-2020. Places are limited so book early to guarantee your place. For bookings and/or enquiries please contact **Debbie on 089-2277151**. For further information, check out Sunny Days After School Facebook page.

Teacher appointments to be made through office

At Piercestown N.S., we pride ourselves in our welcoming ethos in the school. We have an 'open door' policy and welcome input from parents with regard to the children in our classes. We are conscious however, of our supervisory role to all children once the 9.20am bell goes and the school day has started. Therefore, we would ask that if you need to speak to the teacher, requiring a lengthy conversation, we would be grateful if an appointment could be made through the office to meet the teacher at an agreed time. This ensures that you get the full attention you and your child deserve while respecting the duty of care teachers have to the children in their class at all times. Once again, many thanks for your co-operation and understanding with regard to this matter.

Communication for Parents

One of the most effective methods of communication for the school is text-a-parent. **Should you have changed your mobile number or not receive our texts for some reason, please contact the office at your earliest convenience and we will update our records.** We also communicate on the school's webpage <https://piercestownns.wordpress.com> and we issue a monthly newsletter that is sent home with the children. The school can also be contacted by phone at 053 91 58854 or by email at piercestownns@gmail.com

Paperwork - POD/ Admin of medicines *New enrolments*****

While lots of things have gone electronic, we still send home paper work from time to time. Today, new parents will receive information required by the Dept of Ed for their Primary Online Database (POD) that exists in all schools. If your child requires medication or has any health concerns, please complete the Administration of Medicines letter attached and we will issue a Health Care Plan if required. The School Pupil Insurance form will also be coming home soon.

Garda vetting for parents - Appeal

We value parents as partners in education and parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged in our school, e.g. parents often accompany classes on school trips, to swimming lessons or matches. All those who volunteer must be garda vetted under legislation by the Dept. of Education and Skills. **For further information and/or a garda vetting form please contact the school office.** Many thanks to all those who have already completed their garda vetting.

Discovering Drama

Discovery Drama with Olga will take place once again this year. It starts back tomorrow Wednesday 4th September - Junior and Senior Infants from 2:00 to 2:45, 1st to 3rd classes from 3:15 to 4:15 and 4th to 6th classes from 4:15 to 5:15. For further information please contact Olga on 0876858457.

Book bills and introducing NEW E-payments for 2019 – 2020 ****

In Piercestown N.S. we recognise that returning to school can be an expensive time for parents and have therefore made every effort to keep costs to a minimum. Book bills will be sent home in the coming weeks. It is important that all book bills are paid at your earliest convenience. Should people require extra time or wish to pay bills in instalments we are happy to assist with this. Please contact the office for this assistance on 053-9158854. Full confidentiality is guaranteed. **This year sees Piercestown National School continuing to work with you the parents**

to make life easier. In the coming weeks, you will receive your book bill and an instruction leaflet on how you can pay online! No more rooting for money in the bottom of the school bag or trying to make it into the school office with payments. You can pay from the comfort of your home/office/wherever you may be!

Homework journals: 1st – 6th classes

Once again the children have received their own personalised homework journal. These journals were sponsored by local companies that you find advertised in the journal and hence were 'free' for every child in Piercestown N.S. They contain other useful information such as the school calendar, tables, maps, the food pyramid, etc. For your convenience, there is also a middle section where you can complete your child's absent note, cut it out and send it in to the teacher. *Many thanks to all our local sponsors. We really appreciate it.*

Absent notes

In accordance with legal requirements, children should attend school regularly. Under section 21 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, **the Board of Management is required to submit an Annual Attendance Record with details of students who have been absent for 20 days or more.** A note of explanation is required when a child is absent. As stated above absence slips are now available in the centre of the homework journal. Please submit an absent note for all full day absences. If for any reason, your child is collected early or brought to school later than normal please sign them in/out at the office. We appreciate your co-operation with this matter.

Health Promoting School

Piercestown N.S. is in the final stages of becoming a recognised Health Promoting School. This initiative ties in nicely with our other policies and practices, e.g. active school, healthy eating policy and Mindful Mondays. Mindful Mondays will continue on the first Monday of every month - usual home work is suspended in favour of activities that encourage quality time with family. In today's busy world it is more important than ever to promote mental health and well-being of all.

Active School

Piercestown N.S. is now officially a recognised Active School. This year we will be keeping up the good work with activities such as Active Lines after break, 'Go Noodle' in the classroom, etc. and of course plenty of sport, with Mini-7s and Rackard League on the way soon. *Skippy John will get us all hopping, jumping and skipping when he lands on 19th Sept. 2019! Skipping ropes at the ready!*

Healthy Eating Policy – Treat Friday

We would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of our Healthy Eating Policy in school. **We encourage all children to eat healthy lunches every day in school. If parents wish, a small treat can be included in children's lunch boxes on Fridays.** As we are a Green School, children are encouraged to take their papers/wrappers etc. home in their lunch boxes.

Date for your diaries – School Closure announced 16th Oct. 2019

As part of the ongoing continuing professional development of teachers and the roll out of the new Primary Language Curriculum, **the staff of Piercestown N.S have been invited to attend their whole school training in Wexford Education Centre on Wed 16th Oct. 2019. This results in the school being closed on this day.** As stated on our school calendar issued last year, we have one other exceptional day school closure and we have yet to receive this date.

A Word from the Principal

Once again we're up and running in Piercestown N.S. and looking forward to the excitement of what 2019-2020 has to offer! Best of luck to the whole school community as we embark on a new school year. I would like to thank the Board of Management for their service to the school and Piercestown Parents' Association for their continued support. Finally, I look forward to working in partnership with you, the parents, as we strive for the best educational experience for your children. To finish on a quote ***"Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can be"***. (Rita F. Pierson)

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- Skippy John workshop Sept Thursday 19th Sept 2019
- Primary Language Curriculum Day 16th October – **school closed**
- Maths Week 12th – 20th October 2019
- Science Week 10th-17th November, 5th class and Teagasc booked in for Thurs 14th at present
- Sing Out Loud – dates to be confirmed
- Parent teacher meetings November 2019 - dates to be confirmed due to above
- Gymnastics - every Friday Jan for 10 weeks
- Book Fair lands 6th March 2020
- Lá Gaeilge 12ú Márta 2020
- World Down Syndrome Day 21st March 2020
- Purple Day (Epilepsy) 26th March 2020
- World Autism Day 2nd April 2020
- Welcome Infant Day 3rd June 2020
- Active Week 8th - 12th June 2020
- Sports Day 12th June 2020