

## Piercestown Post April 2020

Welcome to the April edition of our newsletter. While we may not be physically in the building the school community of Piercestown is still alive and kicking! A new 'norm' is in place as we all embrace 'distant learning' and 'staying at home'. We miss seeing you all every day and exchanging light-hearted conversations with the children and you the parents when we meet. By continuing our newsletter we aim to give ourselves a feel of 'life before COVID-19'. So as always, grab a few minutes to sit back, relax and get lost in our April newsletter to see what has been going on behind the scenes, in our homes and in your homes!



### Purple Day – World Epilepsy Day

Many thanks to all who participated at home in our Purple Day activities. There were scavenger hunts galore, finger painting, hand prints and so much more. Many thanks to Ms. Rea for including senior infants in our special video made by her class. For those of you who may not have seen it, it is worth looking at on the blog. Go to <https://wordpress.com/block-editor/post/piercestownns.com/4994>

### Autism Awareness Day

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April was World Autism Awareness Day and while it has been celebrated in Piercestown N.S. in previous years, this year we had reason for an extra special celebration as we had opened our new class in Piercestown in September 2019. The newest members of our school family have brought nothing but fun, happiness, learning and kindness to our school. Many thanks to Miss Sinnott, Bryan and Fiona who have led this new venture in our school. Thanks to all who participated in our 'Blue' activities and to Oscar the dog, for leading our scavenger hunt! If you missed it go to <https://wordpress.com/block-editor/post/piercestownns.com/5070>

### The 'Digital Journey' – Embracing Distant Learning

We thought this year that our Digital journey was simply going to involve the new set of iPads that had arrived in our school. How wrong we were! This recent pandemic has called on many of us to upskill our IT skills in a short space of time and has tested our stamina and no doubt patience. We have fully embraced 'distant learning' in as many different ways as we can, with email, seesaw, website, virtual active weeks, voice messages, videos, Zoom meetings and no doubt a few more to come! And you the parents have been AMAZING. You have been patient with us, worked with us, communicated with us and as a team our children are continuing many elements of their education without the face to face contact. If we can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact your teachers on their email addresses or myself on [principal@piercestownns.com](mailto:principal@piercestownns.com)

### Survey this Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>

To ascertain how 'distant learning' is going for you and your child, we have developed a short survey for you to take on **Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>**. This will comprise of at most 10 questions. All surveys are anonymous. The surveys are class based. The purpose of them is to provide us with any suggestions going forward and to find out what is working well for you and your child. This survey will be sent via a link on your text number and is filled in in a matter of minutes. We ask as many of you as possible to complete this survey as it will inform our planning in moving forward. Many thanks for your co-operation.

### Big Birthday Shout Outs!!

We just about fitted our March birthdays in before our school closure, but we missed singing and signing to our April students at normal assembly so without further delay we would like to wish the following people a happy birthday: Paddy and Sarah in 4<sup>th</sup> class, Callum and Rian in Miss Sinnott's class, Riley in 5<sup>th</sup> class, Peter and Aaron in 6<sup>th</sup> class, Tiarnan in 1st class, Polly, Amelia and Aaron in Junior infants and Aoibhinn in Senior infants. We hope you all had a very special day at home celebrating with your families!



*"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!  
Happy birthday dear Paddy, Sarah, Callum, Rian, Riley, Peter,  
Aaron, Tiarnan, Polly, Amelia, Aaron and Aoibhinn!  
Happy birthday to you."*

### **On the Blog!!! – Will you be the next face on our blog? <https://piercestownns.com/>**

Every cloud has a silver lining. And while it may be hard to find these at times, our blog has certainly come to the fore front in recent weeks. Teachers are busily adding some of your photos that you submit to them under their class blog. Go to the home page, go across the top to 'BLOG' and click on the drop down menu to find your 'CLASS' and see what your teacher has shared. We will be building this up in the coming weeks. Active Week of course has offered us the perfect opportunity to bring our community together. Every day, there has been a short gallery of photos on our blog. Keep an eye out to see if you can spot yourself or your friends! Don't forget you can sign up to the blog to receive notifications on posts as they are made so you don't miss a trick!

### **Holy Communion Class**

Our First Holy Communion, which was due to take place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May, has now been postponed. That said, the children in 2<sup>nd</sup> class and their parents are still very much engaged in preparation for this special sacrament. They recently 'attended' the church ceremony on Holy Thursday, by webcam from the safety of their own homes, as part of their "Do this in Memory" programme. Mrs. Corrigan continues to offer guidance and support to parents at home. They have been given access to the Grow in Love website and its online resources to facilitate their child's learning and preparation. The children have also begun learning their special prayers. We will update you as soon as possible with regard to rescheduling a date but in the meantime the preparation continues and the children are still looking forward to their big day!

### **Confirmation Class**

Our 6<sup>th</sup> class continue to prepare for their Confirmation at home virtually. We await advice from both the government and Bishop's House about how we proceed. As soon as we get information, we will relay it to you all immediately.

### **Class of 2020 - A Special Message for You!**

Who could have known that the class of 2020 would have been plunged into such a final year. We always remind 6<sup>th</sup> class to make the most of their time with us and enjoy the memories, as school days really are the best days of your lives. But alas, for now this has temporarily been snatched from us. But I have a special message for the Class of 2020 and will write to you in detail in the coming weeks. Most of you have spent 8 years with us. All of you matter hugely to us. You are our graduates of 2020. No matter what life throws at us, your leaving Piercestown N.S. will not go unmarked, and this I assure you. We will think creatively and ensure that you receive the fond farewell that you deserve. You will go down in history for many reasons, but you will not be lost in history! In the meantime, a huge thanks to Ms. Hearne who offers 6<sup>th</sup> class regular 'zooms' to stay in touch and work together in these unprecedented times. Exceptional times call for exceptional measures and Ms. Hearne is doing everything to ensure our 6<sup>th</sup> class journey continues no matter what. So do not despair. Keep those chins up and the heads down. Continue to work hard, play hard and create memories. It is not goodbye just yet!!

### **Active Week 2020**

'Walk, run, jump or skip COVID-19 won't make us quit! And there are no quitters at Piercestown N.S. We have embraced National Active Week with a determination and commitment like never before. As the week is ongoing, we will wait until the next newsletter to update you with winners. Don't forget to keep checking the blog for your daily challenges and activities! Special thanks to Miss Sinnott who is coordinating our WHOLE school dance event, Ms. Rea for creating all of our lunchtime activities and daily challenges videos, Ms. Hearne for helping to co-ordinate the week and to ALL the staff for their participation and support for the first ever 'Virtual Active Week'. The response and participation has been overwhelming and it has brought us as a school community together at a time when we needed it the most! "Alone we are strong, but together we are stronger!"

### **Annual Art Exhibition and Launch of 'We Are Writers'**

Our much loved Annual Art Exhibition was due to take place on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April but unfortunately has also been postponed for now. Our plan this year was to launch Piercestown N.S.'s second edition of "We are Writers" at this event. Many of you have pre-ordered your copy and we look forward to a time when we can launch our wonderful collection of short stories, poems and much more! In the meantime, for a trip down memory lane, click on the link to re-visit last year's Annual Art Exhibition! <https://piercestownns.com/?s=art+exhibition>

### **Draft Admissions Policy**

Many thanks to the staff of Piercestown, officers of our Parents Association, the Board of Management and all who offered feedback on the mandatory Admission's Policy. It has been sent to the Patron's body for review.

### **Enrolment for School Year 2020-2021**

Piercestown N.S. are now taking enrolments for the school year 2020-2021. For further information, contact the school on [piercestownns@gmail.com](mailto:piercestownns@gmail.com) If you know of anyone wishing for further information or who would like to contact our school they can also email on [principal@piercestownns.com](mailto:principal@piercestownns.com)

### **Virtual Board of Management meetings**

The school building may be closed but school life continues and so does school business. A recent Board of Management meeting was held on April 28<sup>th</sup> over Zoom. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Board who are embracing this new experience and technology to ensure our school is still their priority!

### **Agreed report by the Board of Management**

- The Board of Management will continue to run the school effectively through the use of Zoom meetings
- The Board of Management extends their sympathy on the bereavement of Mrs. Dolores Byrne's father
- The Board wishes to offer congratulations to the school community on their participation our virtual Active Week 2020
- The Admissions Policy has been ratified. Many thanks to all who contributed. This has now been sent to the Patron for approval as required
- Thank you to the school community for their continued co-operation throughout these trying times
- Special word of thanks to the staff for their commitment, dedication and continued hard work during this time
- Well done to 2<sup>nd</sup> class for participating via Webinar in their Do this in Memory programme and to both 2<sup>nd</sup> class and 6<sup>th</sup> class for continuing their Sacramental preparations remotely. As soon as we get further updates, we will be in touch
- The school calendar 2020/2021 has been temporarily postponed until we have a further update from our Government

### **A Word from the Principal**

The calendar rolls on and it is hard to believe that it is now 6 weeks since we parted company. What initially felt impossible, has almost become the new norm as we move from day to day. We are using all avenues to remain connected as a school community from email, to the school website, to texts and even our newsletters. It is so lovely to hear your voices over zoom, see your faces on our blog and hear about your work and daily activities in your emails. We thank you for your continued communication with us. It makes what sometimes feels unbearable that bit more bearable. As we await further guidance, In-school Management are regularly meeting to discuss important issues and are working behind the scenes to ensure that when we get the green light to re-open our school building, the safety of our school community will be our priority. In the meantime, continue to do what you are doing. You are doing the best you can in an impossible situation. Be kind to yourselves on days when life is that bit harder, congratulate yourselves when things go well, don't judge yourselves or compare yourselves, we are each on our own journey. And remember, when we meet again, back at our old stomping ground, we will meet your children and you wherever you are and bring you to where you need to be. We are all in this together, be it on varied journeys, but the reunion will be EPIC! We miss you so much and look forward to being back together. In the meantime, continue to mind each other, be kind and be safe!

***"Sometimes the best thing that we can do is not think, not wonder, not imagine, not obsess.  
Just breath and have faith that everything will work out for the best"***

### **Here are some dates for your diaries:**

At the time of going to our website, our return date has yet to be confirmed, the Dept of Education has issued the following statement:

**All schools, pre-schools and further and higher education settings will remain closed until further notice.**

***As we hear more, we will keep you updated!***