



Welcome to the second edition of our monthly newsletter and we hope you are all well rested after the midterm break. Normally, this edition would have issued pre midterm but with Maths Week, Mystery Gifts and Halloween the time sneaked up on us. At present, social media and newsfeeds are filled with the reports of rising numbers. Therefore, we all remain on high alert, here at Piercestown N.S. We remain committed to working together as a team and a school community to ensure the safest setting for all of our school community, staff, children and parents alike. Our COVID prize each month, allows us the opportunity to remind our children on a daily basis of our day to day essential requirements to keep COVID at bay. Once again, we thank you the parents for your assistance and efforts with social distancing and the wearing of masks. We continue to be rigid in our protocols including the use of pods and bubbles in our efforts to limit any possible spread. Despite all of this, the learning and fun continues! Read ahead, to get a flavour of some of the 'thinking outside the box' that took place over the last month!

Class of the Month – Senior Infants!

Congratulations to senior infants who were the worthy winners of the much-loved Pizza Party, homework pass and certificate of achievement for the month of October. This month saw three classes draw on points. In previous years, a draw between two classes would see both classes win but when it's tied at more than two classes we revert back to the previous months' score and add it on. This meant that Senior infants pipped the other two classes. Congratulations to Ms. Ryan and Senior infants who can look forward to their 'pizza party' this Friday and the use of their homework pass!

Covid Champions – 4th class!

Our Covid Champions for this month are 4th class. Well done to them for continuing to keep us all safe by sanitising, keeping their distance, practicing good cough/sneeze etiquette and only using their own things. Now more than ever, we need to double down on our covid champion efforts. Please remind your children at home how important our efforts are.

PA – Mystery Gift!

With the promise of a special 'Mystery Gift' for each class, the excitement was huge in the run up to Monday 18th October. When the big day finally came, Amanda and Suzanne from our Parents Association arrived at 12 noon to hand over the surprise gifts. While plan B had to be executed due to the inclement weather, it did nothing to dampen the spirits of the children. The classes were more than happy to pause their lessons and listen to commentary from Ms. Walsh on the intercom, while two children from each class came up to the main door to receive their box and proudly bring it back to their class. As each gift was revealed cheers could be heard from each classroom, all the way up the corridor. There were musical instruments, art supplies, sports equipment and dress up costumes, not forgetting sweets for the children too. There really was something for everybody as our Parents' Association very kindly included a box of treats for the staff also. Such nice surprises for all. We wish to thank our wonderful Parents Association for this lovely occasion and indeed for all that they do to support our school. It really is very much appreciated. Check out the blog to witness some of the excitement on the day. <https://piercestownns.com/>

PA – AGM

Parents' Association AGM took place on Wed 21st October. It was nice to see people in person again, while complying with all public health guidelines, after a year of minimal face to face interactions on this front. Our officers for the year 2021-2022 are as follows: Chairperson Amanda Whitmore, Vice Chairperson Jenny McDonagh, Treasurer Suzanne Connolly, Secretary Sharon Mahony. The new committee members were announced as follows: Karina Cadogan, Laura Campbell, Shaun Ahern, Elaine Berry, Anne Walsh, Steph Quigley and Avril McGee. We look forward to working with our newest members and would like to take the opportunity once again to thank members both past and present for all they have contributed to over the years. It is very much appreciated.

Camán Everybody!

Piercestown N.S. were delighted to welcome some very special guests on Tuesday 20th October, for the official launch of Camán Everybody – a programme aimed at introducing the fundamental skills of hurling from a young age. Among those present were Chairperson of Coiste na Nóg, Mick O’Connell, John O’Connor, Coaching Officer in St. Martin’s, Séamus Casey, Games Promotion Officer and Willie Clancy who made the hurls. Ms. Walsh also extended a warm welcome to Vanessa and Becky, members of the Kirby Family, who are generously making an annual donation towards the cost of the hurls for the programme. This very kind gesture is to honour the memory of Vanessa’s brother, Michael Kirby, who was a past pupil of our school and an avid hurler. Two pods of children, one from Junior Infants and one from Senior Infants, were invited up to the socially distant gathering in the PE hall, to receive their hurls on behalf of their classes. The children were delighted to be chosen and proudly received their hurls presented to them by Vanessa and Becky. We are very fortunate in our school to have such a wonderful relationship with our local club, St. Martin’s and we would like to thank all involved in bringing this latest initiative to our school. Special word of thanks also to the Kirby family. No doubt their generosity will lead to many boys and girls growing up to share the same passion for our national game as Michael did. Have a look at our school website for short video of this event!

Lunch time League Final – 6th class

Weather didn’t dampen the spirits of the hurlers and camogie players in 6th class as they took to the field following the Camán Everybody launch on Tuesday the 19th October, for the final of their highly competitive lunchtime league. Two teams had booked their place in the final after a nail biting semi-final with only the minimum between the sides. For the final, one team donned the colours of the St. Martins while the others wore the purple and gold of Wexford. It may not have been the Croke Park tunnel, but both teams ventured out to the theme tune of the Sunday Game. Team Wexford got off to a flying start, scoring 2-1 in the first few minutes but the St. Martins weren’t going to give up without a fight. With solid performances all over the field they started to find their feet and went in at half time 3 points to the good. St Martins scored another goal early in the second half to stretch out their lead and despite the best efforts of team Wexford they couldn’t overcome this advantage, with the St. Martins team winning on a score line of 4-3 to 5-4. Following presentations of the medals to the winning team by Vanessa Kirby, two special awards were presented to Amy Power and Donal Dwyer for the work rate and skill they showed throughout the final by club chairperson Mick O’Connell and John O’Connor, coaching officer. In the words of John O’Connor, even though one team was presented with medals after a great final every one of the 22 children who participated in the lunchtime league were winners, for the skills they showed and improved upon week after week and for the fun and sporting manner in which every game was played. A huge well done to all and many thanks must also go to the club GPO Seamus Casey for officiating at all these games.

Big Birthday Shout Outs For September and October!

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Bobby, Niamh, Oran, Oisín and Liam from Junior infants; Caoimhe, Chloe, Henri, Tom, Oliver, Oisín, Elodie and Christian from Senior infants; Callum, Tom, Tess, Jamie, Ruth, Levi and Amy from 1st class, Donagh, Ryan, Aodhán, Aoibhínn D, Robyn, Heath, Ciara, Eoin B and Willow from 2nd class; Erin, Nicole, Malachy, Kate and Joe from 3rd class; Lily, Isaac, Ava, Séamus, Leah, Cora, Leo and Rose from 4th class; Alex, Eve, Olivia, Annie and Molly from 5th class; Amy, Conor, Kyle and Ali-Jay from 6th class. What a lot of birthdays! We hope you all enjoyed your special day!!!



“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!”

Happy birthday dear Bobby, Niamh, Oran, Oisín, Liam, Caoimhe, Chloe, Henri, Tom, Oliver, Oisín, Elodie, Christian, Callum, Tom, Tess, Jamie, Ruth, Levi, Amy, Donagh, Ryan, Aodhán, Aoibhínn D, Robyn, Heath, Ciara, Eoin B, Willow, Erin, Nicole, Malachy, Kate, Joe, Lily, Isaac, Ava, Séamus, Leah, Cora, Leo, Rose,

Alex, Eve, Olivia, Annie, Molly, Amy, Conor, Kyle and Ali-Jay!

Happy birthday to you.”

Maths Week – 18th to 22nd October 2021

Always a firm favourite with pupils and staff alike, this year's Maths Week did not disappoint! Our budding mathematicians enjoyed a wide variety of activities, from old favourites such as Tables Bee Champion and Countdown, to new activities such as Number Hunt for our senior classes. Congratulations to our Tables Bee champions – Tiarnan Quigley who won our junior competition and Leah Healy who won the senior competition. Congratulations also to our Countdown champion – Ben Stevenson. These events were held outside with a live audience, a step up from last year, when they were held outside and videoed. Rest assured all COVID protocols were adhered to.

Throughout the week there were maths trails, math quizzes, card games, dice games and more, each taking place within individual classes to keep bubbles intact and safeguard against Covid. Great fun was had again with Izak 9 cubes and some classes also availed of the live streamed events offered by MathsWeekTV. We had competitions galore also throughout the week - guess the weight of the pumpkin, guess how many Smarties are in the jar and problem of the day on Aladdin Connect. Congratulations to Isaac Scallan who took home the pumpkin with an estimate of 5.5kg for the 5.6kg pumpkin and also to John Kenny who won the sweets. We have no doubt that John was a popular family member at the dinner table on Friday evening!!

This year saw a new activity for 3rd to 6th class pupils, who all had to hunt for the numbers on the 100 square in the world around them. Each class from 3rd- 6th was given a set of numbers and Ms. Walsh set the challenge of who could complete their section of the grid first. 6th class rose to the challenge and won this event. That left four numbers remaining. All children were told the four numbers and the first four pictures emailed in were the winner. Congratulations to Conor Newport, Tom Barrett, Holly O' Hanlon and Lucia Moore for their success.

6th class were in awe at Ms. Hearne's amazing card tricks! I wonder did any of you get caught out!

The rest of the lucky prize winners were announced at an outdoor presentation of prizes ceremony on Tuesday November 2nd. With everything that was on offer – maths activities, games, puzzles, challenges, competitions, etc. Maths Week 2021 was a fantastic week of fun and learning for all

Mobile Library returned

The mobile library facility is once again in operation this year, visiting our school every fortnight. The mobile library service currently takes requests from the teachers and drops books to our school which are then disseminated to our classrooms. As with our own libraries, quarantining of books takes place so that all public safety measures are intact. Many thanks to Wexford library for this wonderful service!

Enrolment for Piercestown N.S. – opens in November

We have been informed by the patron that schools may publish the Annual Admission Notice from **29th November 2021** and may commence **acceptance of applications for admission from 10th January 2022**. This means that our Admissions notice with our information about anyone wishing to enrol their child for the school year 2022-2023 will go live on our website on this day. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the school office on 053-9158854.

Swimming is Back – Ready, Steady, Splash!!!

We are delighted to resume another piece of normality with swimming lessons taking place this Friday for 4th class. As per our whole school Physical Education policy, the children usually partake in swimming lessons with their class in 3rd class. As 4th class missed this due to swimming pool and school closures alike, we are inviting 4th class to make up ground starting this Friday. The information about the lessons was sent via Aladdin during the midterm break. Apologies to 3rd class. Unfortunately, due to continued restrictions in some swimming pools, the planned lessons for 3rd class are now postponed until February 2022. We will be in touch in the new year to confirm this update.

Say Cheese – Official School Photographer – November 11th

Image Masters will return to the grounds of Piercestown N.S on November 11th. This year they will take Junior infant photos and Junior infants with their siblings. Last year, we pressed pause on class photos but this year with a little 'outside the box' thinking our class photos will be taken by combining our pods and using technology. So, don't forget to comb the hair that one last time on November 11th. We will send a reminder text the day before also.

Tractor Run – Fundraiser for Ms. Sinnott’s Class

Rathangan was the place to be last Sunday October 24th as a ‘Tractor and Truck’ run had been organised by two of our families from Ms. Sinnott’s Class. What had started out as a mere chat between two people, turned into a roaring success. There were tractors and trucks galore on a glorious day of sunshine, fun and laughter and above all AMAZING GENEROSITY. From the tractor and truck run to a fun filled auction including the sale of a goat, a puppy, a lamb as well as a plough and some bales of hay, the fundraiser itself was a roaring success. **A grand total of €5813.21 was raised. In the coming weeks, a cheque will be presented to the school from the organisers of this event.**

Such events don’t just happen and while it is impossible to name everyone for fear of leaving anyone out, the following people deserve a special mention: Jenny and Colm (Lauryn’s parents), Mairéad and Richie (Callum’s parents), Billy Bates – the owner of Rathangan Bar, Chris the Manager of Rathangan bar, all the boys and girls in Ms. Sinnott’s class and everyone who entered the run on the day.

The generosity of the community on Sunday last will ensure that Ms Sinnott, Bryan, Fiona and Ms. Walsh can continue to plan ahead, buy resources and organise trips that otherwise would not be possible. Having only opened our Class in 2019, mere months before the pandemic changed the landscape of our world, we had yet to be in a position to organise any big event. As the saying on the boxes on Sunday said, ‘Little by little, little becomes a lot’. This was surely the case on Sunday last. Check out some of the photos from the day by going to our school blog.

Making history with an Equestrian Entry - Congrats to Joe, Sarah, Tommy and Jack

Wexford Equestrian Centre was also a hive of activity on the bank holiday Monday hosting the interschools competition. Piercestown National School saw itself represented in this sport for the first time ever! And represented they were! Congratulations to the Piercestown team, comprising of Sarah, Joe, Tommy and Jack who put in a wonderful performance coming 2nd out of a total of 17 schools! What an AMAZING achievement for their first ever show! How proud are we! We look forward to uploading some photos in the coming days on our school website as we receive them. Hot off the press we can reveal they were continuing their run of success yesterday coming 3rd out of 19. There is no stopping them at the minute and all at Piercestown are so proud of them!

CLASS hours

The Dept. of Education in September announced the addition of CLASS (Covid Learning And Support Scheme), a one off bank of extra hours, to be utilised by a school in the academic year 2021-2022 to support individuals, groups or classes who had been most impacted by COVID. In collaboration with the SET team, a comprehensive plan was developed with the intention of beginning on October 11th. Unfortunately, due to the current substitute crisis that has been discussed across the media, this additional staff member has not yet come to fruition. We will, however, be utilising this bank of hours when it is possible to do so.

Substitute Shortage

As mentioned above, the country is currently in the middle of a substitute crisis. To summarise, there is simply an insufficient number of available teachers to cover any absences. This is impacting all schools nationwide. Piercestown prides itself in our ability to always offer the best education. Please be assured that at all times quality of teaching and learning is our priority. In the absence of an available substitute teacher, our school is committed to ensure the best options at the given time are availed of.

Exceptional School Closure

As per the school calendar, a reminder that our school closes for an exceptional school closure date on **November 26th**. This is to facilitate staff development from the opening of our ASD class in September 2019. While, in ways it feels like light years ago, the NCSE are keen for us as a staff to avail of this additional training day, following the postponement of previous dates due to school closures as a result of the pandemic. Many thanks for your patience and understanding.

Half day Closure

As per the calendar, our staff are required to close for one half day each term to facilitate continuing professional development for the Primary Language Curriculum in English and Irish. This, as per a text sent recently, has been confirmed for **10th December**. Thanks again for your patience and understanding.

Communication for Parents – Aladdin Connect

Many thanks to all who have embraced Aladdin Connect. Maths Week provided a nice opportunity also for us to see Aladdin Connect in action again. Don't forget to download the app if you have not already done so. We feel this is improving communication, in a time where physical communication is being reduced for our own safety. We hope to use it to schedule 'PT meetings' in November and to continue to grant permissions going forward. **Should you have changed your mobile number or email address or emergency contact numbers, please log into your Aladdin Connect app and update these.** We also communicate on the school's webpage <https://piercestownns.wordpress.com> and **we issue a monthly newsletter that will now be sent home via Aladdin Connect.** The school can also be contacted by phone at 053 91 58854 or by email at piercestownns@gmail.com

Parent Teacher Meetings 2021 – Coming soon (but not face to face!)

As a result of the school closures in the last two years, we are aware that parents may be anxious about their children's progress. We continue to work very hard as a school community to assess where the children were upon their return and identify any gaps that may have existed as a result of two unprecedented lockdowns. We value the communication between parents and ourselves as professionals and respect the parental role as the primary educators. Last year, saw the phone system being utilised for PT meetings. While we would hope to return to face to face meetings, at present with rising numbers this is not possible. Therefore, we are hoping to organise PT Meetings using the same format as last year. We will update you in the coming week so that this can take place.

Christmas Cards

Over the last number of years, we organise a small fundraiser for our school by the children designing their own personalised Christmas Cards. It is always well enjoyed by the children and offers a lovely opportunity to share Christmas spirit with family and friends in a really personal way. **The card sample went home on the Monday before midterm and we ask all parents to please contact us if your child's name has an error before it goes to final print.** The packs contains 10 cards and costs €8, with €3 per pack coming to the school as a fundraiser. Tuesday 2nd was the closing date. Well done to all of the boys and girls on their wonderful Christmas cards.

Book bills have been issued

Many thanks to all who have paid/ began paying their book bills to date. We realise these are unprecedented times and are appreciative of any payments that can be paid. If you are having difficulty making payments, please contact the office so that we can be of assistance and put a supportive plan in place. All of these queries/ conversations are dealt with, with the utmost confidentiality.

Science Week 2021 – 7th-14th November 2021

We barely draw a breath after Maths Week to see Science Week take place. Junior Achievement programme have once again offered Piercestown NS the opportunity to avail of the EPA sponsored workshop called Climate Change. This has been accepted by 4th class. This involves 2 x 45 minute sessions which a staff member from the Environmental Protection Agency delivers virtually during Science Week. All materials for the workshop will arrive in advance of the interactive sessions. 4th class and Ms. Lehané are looking forward to this event.

Dr. Anna Fenlon has once again offered 5th class the opportunity to take part in an online Science Quiz on Tues 11th Nov at 11am. This year's quiz, will focus on Fruit and Vegetables in support of the 2021 International year of fruit and vegetable. This will be a fun interactive session run on Zoom using the app Kahoot. All schools that take part will receive a gift token from Teagasc for their classroom and prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place are up for grabs too! These are just two events. We have no doubt that all classrooms, however, will be awash with Science Experiments. Congratulations to Mr. Murphy who was instrumental in ensuring our latest STEM award, proudly being hung in our reception porch just in time for Science Week 2021. Teachers in all other classes will no doubt celebrate Science Week from the safety of their classes also, with all safety precautions in COVID times being adhered to.

Halloween Fun COVID style

Friday, October 23rd, saw lady luck shine on us once again on the weather front. While the children dearly miss the 'Freaky Friday' walk from the St. Martin's, all agree it is nicely substituted with a DJ out the front of the school. It was a joy for passers-by to witness children (and adults) dancing their socks (and Halloween costumes) off with such

enthusiasm. And just for fun, all classes either voted on a costume winner, or a winner was drawn out of a hat for younger classes. Congratulations to all the winners! We had many famous faces in the grounds as well as witches, ghosts and zombies! Rumour has it that Winnie and Mrs. Brown were teaching 6th class!

A Word from the Principal

After an exciting half term, the midterm break was a welcome break for all. Huge congratulations to our newest school members on the successful completion of their first half term with us! They have grown so much in a short space of time! Covid is still a threat to our everyday functioning. We saw in the media, some schools close before the midterm. We are working to the best of our ability to ensure our school is not plunged into a similar scenario. At present, unions, advisors and NPHET are re-examining the possibility of reintroducing the contact tracing system for schools. We await any such change in guidance and will update you of any changes if/when they happen. Therefore, we ask you the parents to continue to support our efforts. If your child is unwell, please keep them at home and/or arrange for a PCR test if advised to or if indeed you have any doubt. Let's continue to work together as a team.

"Unity is strength... where there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved". - Mattie Stepanek

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- School Photographer 11th Nov. 2021
- Science Week 8th-15th Nov. 2021
- Swimming lessons for 4th class begin Fri. 5th Nov. 2021
- Parent teacher meetings dates to be confirmed Nov. 2021
- GAA Coaching continues on Tuesdays post midterm
- Missed rugby sessions to be completed
- Board of Management meeting November- date TBC
- Dept. approved - Exceptional School Closure Fri. 26th Nov. 2021
- Dept. approved - Additional half day closure Fri. 10th Dec. 2021