

Welcome to the sixth edition of our monthly newsletter! For a short month, we were very busy and packed a lot in! Spring is in the air, our daffodils planted in November are starting to come to fruition and no doubt people are starting to enjoy the stretch in the evenings. Hopefully, you still have some time to have a quick read about what we got up to over the last few weeks.



Big News - Second ASD class sanctioned for 2023 2024

Friday 3rd February brought a big announcement to the school community. First thing in the morning, the news broke to staff that Piercestown National School will be expanding and opening our doors to a second special class for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in September 2023. The excitement among the staff first and foremost, was admirable, and reflective of the inclusivity that has further grown in our school over the last number of years. While we are not naïve in the workload that such expansion creates, the overall feeling was one of opportunity, welcome, gratefulness and commitment. The Board of Management are delighted to accept this opportunity and look forward to working hard behind the scenes to continue to progress our requests for improved facilities. We look forward to the months ahead and all it brings, and we cannot wait to welcome another class and their families to our school, along with our Junior infants for 2023.

Green Team update!

February saw the return of the Green Schools under Ms. Ryan and the first official meeting of the committee – comprising of two students from 3rd class to 6th class. Donagh McGee, Emily Cooper, Annmarie Butler, Lily Fox, Jessica McCluskey, Lucy Ormonde, Teegan O’ Brien and Cora Roche were super excited to be chosen to represent the school. Their first task was our hugely successful ‘10 day BIG TRAVEL CHALLENGE’ which saw a massive reduction in car congestion outside the school and a large uptake in park n stride. The children thoroughly enjoyed the extra independence in walking to school and really got behind the initiative which we hope they can keep up now even after the challenge. The committee will be applying for the renewal of the ‘Global Citizenship – Energy Flag’ in the coming weeks and have set the wheels in motion for an ‘Action Day’ as well as interesting, informational projects and energy saving ideas for our school and the wider community. Stay tuned to the blog for updates and photos. <https://piercestownns.com/green/>

Big Birthday Shout Outs - March!

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Leo from Junior infants; Kate, Isaac Lexi and Oisín from Senior infants; Clara from 1st class, Oisín from 2nd class; Daniel, Izzie, Oisín, Jack and Ruairí from 4th class; Jessica and Kelan from 5th class and Luke from 6th class. We hope you all enjoy your special day!!!



*“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday dear Leo, Kate, Isaac, Lexi, Oisín, Clara, Oisín,
Daniel, Izzie, Oisín, Jack, Ruairí, Jessica, Kelan and Luke.
Happy birthday to you.”*

‘We are Writers’- Illustrator Competition and the winners are.....

As we signed off the last newsletter, we were days away from announcing the winner of our Illustrator competition for our ‘We are Writers’ book 2023. Fr. Aodhán was assigned the tough task of adjudication. Two highly commended entries were selected from all classes from 1st-6th class and from these the overall winner was picked. We had a lovely presentation and unveiling of the winners at our last month’s assembly and in no particular order the winners were as follows:

1st class- Elodie Mahoney, Chloe O’Mahony

2nd class – Mae Campbell, Myah Healy

3rd class – Aoibhinn Field, Katie Stamp

4th class – Abbie Walsh, Izzie Mernagh

5th class – Lucia Moore, Lily Hayes

6th class – Teegan O'Brien, Eve Howlin

And the overall winner was Abbie Walsh from 4th class!! Huge congratulations to Abbie who then got to join Ms. Walsh in the office to view her design on the screen and select her choice of colour to compliment her illustration for the cover. We can't wait for the sample book to arrive! As you may have heard from the children, we are going to launch our 'We are Writers' with the return of the Annual Art Exhibition on May 11th. Follow the link to our website to see photos of the winners and their cover illustrations. <https://piercestownns.com/>

Art Exhibition to Return – Wohoo!!!

After a long two years, our Annual Art Exhibition will make its come back on May 11th. This whole school event, which takes place outside of school hours, promises to be bigger and better than ever. For those of you who are not familiar with the event, this Art Exhibition showcases at least one piece of art from every single child in our school. The art pieces are put on display throughout the school and Helen Gaynor, local artist, joins us at school to officially open our Art Exhibition. This year, we are delighted to show case our sample 'We are Writers' book, which can then be ordered through the school and we hope to have a local author on the night to say a few words about writing! Finally, as you will know from previous newsletters, 4th-6th class have had a BLAST, and in doing so, created some epic comics! We are delighted to invite Colum Kavanagh, BLAST facilitator, to our event to say a few words about our comics which will be on display also. As always, our amazing Piercestown Parents' Association will be on hand on the night to offer refreshments and add that extra touch to this much loved event. So mark Thursday 11th May in your diaries and we look forward to seeing you there!

Student Council – let's get back at it!!

There was great excitement on Friday 24th, as Ms. Walsh revisited the assembly on the setting up of a Students Council. Covid may have stopped us in our tracks previously but this cohort of pupils is already working behind the scenes on other committees and are eager to get the Student Council back up and running. The Student Council is open to all pupils from 3rd to 6th class who wish to run for 'election'. To keep the momentum, a short, sharp timeframe was put in place. The children had the weekend to decide if they wished to put themselves forward for nominations. Following this, on Monday morning, their speech frames were given out. This allows the children to prepare a two minute speech for their class as to 'why' they should be the chosen candidate. The speeches will run over the course of the week with a 'pre-election black out period' from 2.45pm Thursday. Elections will be held on Friday with the ballot boxes being held under lock and key for the weekend. The official count will take place on Monday 6th March with the results being announced on this day. Day one kicked off with some pre made posters, such was the enthusiasm. Let the fun begin! See the student council section of our website for updates! <https://piercestownns.com/student-council-2/>

World Book Day - Let's make a week of it - Story telling, Golden tickets and Pyjamas!

World Book Day is on Thursday 2nd March this year. While we avoid adding expense to families by engaging in the 'dress up as characters' we ensure the day is very well marked in school, with in-school competitions, quizzes, extra reading time and so much more! World Book Day coincides with the arrival of our Book Fair! Our book fair will land at some stage on World Book Day Thursday 2nd March. The book fair will be open to parents and pupils each morning from 9.10am-9.30am and kindly facilitated by our Parents' Association. After two long years without this opportunity, we are delighted to welcome it back. We will host an **evening event on Monday 6th March**. This allows working parents an opportunity to visit the book fair with their children, should they wish to do so outside of school hours. Similar to 2020, we are delighted to welcome back author, playwright, story teller and much loved grandfather of Tess, Lily and Cora, Billy Roche back into our school. **Billy has kindly agreed to join us and bring his magic of storytelling to life. This will be in three sessions, to cater for the various age groups. Junior and senior infant age group will take place from 6.40pm- 7.00pm, 1st -3rd class age group from 7.10pm-7.30pm and the last session will be tailored for older children from 4th-6th class 7.35pm-8pm. Each group will be given a ticket on the way into the session and one lucky winner of each session will win a 'Golden Ticket' and a prize.** To mark World Book Day, all children will receive a voucher worth €1.50 which can be redeemed against any book (not stationery) at the book fair.

To add to the fun (and possibly ease the practicality of bedtime) we will invite the children to attend the story telling sessions in pyjamas, if they wish to do so. We will send reminders about the opening of the Book Fair times via Aladdin in the coming days. For those who cannot attend the Book Fair in person, there is an option to look at a catalogue online, make some online purchases and the books will be given out from the fair if they are available or put on order to arrive if they are not available. This information will also be sent out on Aladdin.

Many thanks to the Parents' Association. We really appreciate your support on this important event. Not only does it foster a love of books and reading amongst our children, it is also a way of earning points for the classes to purchase new books from Scholastic for their classrooms!

Chess Update

Our chess teams headed off to Gaelscoil Enniscorthy on Thursday the 2nd of February where they pitted their chess knowledge against many other schools. There was over 120 children present from other schools around the county and the tension was high throughout the day with each player playing 6 games of chess. The Buds team, called the Gallant Knights, from 3rd and 4th Class comprising of Meabh Ahern, Rogan Sunter, Tiarnán Quigley, Daniel Jordan, Santiago Fortune, Eoin Durnan, Donagh McGee, Jack O' Hanlon ended the day on the top of their leaderboard, ahead of four other teams with a great overall score of 43 points from a possible 48. The Masters team, called the Rookies, from 5th and 6th class of John Kenny, Charlie Tenanty, Tommy Codd, Luke Kelly, Arvin Boodhoo, Fionn Wilson, Joseph Collier, Jack Sunter also emerged top of their respective leaderboard, scoring an impressive 39.5 points out of a possible 48 and leaving the 9 other teams in this section trailing them. They definitely proved that when it comes to chess they were no 'Rookies'!! It was a fantastic achievement for both teams proving that the tradition of chess in Piercestown National School is very much alive and well after taking a little hiatus during covid times. This year we have introduced new trophy called the Eamonn Barrett Chess Trophy to acknowledge his contribution to chess over his time in Piercestown National School and we look forward to presenting this in the coming weeks to the School Chess Champion of 2022/2023. We will also be presenting medals to the class medal winners. A huge well done to all of the children from 3rd to 6th class for their full involvement in this competition, with every single one of them improving their chess knowledge along the way.

Mini 7s and Rackard League

Hurling and camogie season truly kicked off this month with the boys and girls joining Murrintown for training sessions up in the St Martins pitch. The first competitive action took place on Monday with the girls heading off to play Barntown in the Mini 7's competition. Unfortunately one of the teams in the group couldn't field a team so the fight for group winners spot was between ourselves and Barntown. The first half was a very tight affair with very few chances for either team with girls from Piercestown working themselves into the game. In the second half Barntown's physical strength won out and they emerged victorious on a scoreline of 3-0 to 0-1. Hard luck to the girls but Rackard league season begins with a match away to Rathangan this Thursday so hopefully we can put some of the lessons we learned on Monday to good use and change the result this time. The boys mini 7's competition group stage begins today, Wednesday where they face Rathangan and Rosslare. Good luck to the boys!

Rugby blitz

As well as our traditional love for the sports of GAA, we also love to foster an interest in other sports and presently have rugby coaching with Leinster coach, Graham Barry for all the classes from 3rd to 6th class. 5th and 6th Class headed off to the Wexford Wanderers Rugby Club on Friday to 10th of February where they entered 3 teams in a blitz competition with 36 teams entered from schools across the county. Each team played 5/6 games of tag rugby and a great day was had by all. The boys and girls from 5th and 6th Class were a credit to their teachers and the school on their exemplary behaviour throughout the day.

February has seen us return to lunchtime league competitions with 5th and 6th class currently entering the knockout stage of their Basketball lunchtime League. Five teams from 5th and 6th have been battling it out over the last number of weeks in the group stages. It is great to see the children learn the skills of these other sports and who knows maybe the next NBA star can come from Piercestown NS!!

Daffodil Day Fundraiser 2023

The staff and children of Piercestown National School will be offered the opportunity to raise vital funds for the Irish Cancer Society by supporting the annual Daffodil Day fundraiser which takes place on the 24th March 2023. To coincide with this day, we will have daffodil pins and other items for sale in the staff room for staff members to purchase should they wish. We will also have a daffodil pin for every child in the school. Parents are under no obligation to purchase, however, if you wish you may donate to this fundraiser. **Collection boxes will be available at the school on 22nd and 23rd March.** Your support for such a worthy cause is always greatly appreciated.

Treasured Person's Day in Miss Sinnott's Class

Just before we broke for midterm break, Ms. Sinnott's class took the opportunity to host a 'Treasured Person's Day' that is associated with Catholic schools' week in primary schools. It is hard to believe that the last time Ms. Sinnott's class hosted this event was literally before the world shut down due to the pandemic. It was so lovely to have their families and treasured people in our class for a short while to witness and celebrate the love that the children in Ms. Sinnott's class share for their 'treasured persons'. It was a morning of chat, music, refreshments and celebration, and most importantly, taking time out of our busy lives to mark the most important thing in all of our lives, that of relationships. Huge thanks to Ms. Sinnott and her team as always for showcasing the children's work. It is greatly appreciated.

Floor Markings

Saturday 11th February, saw a new arrival to the school making the corridors a more exciting, inviting place! Children can now hop, skip, 'crab walk' and bounce to their destinations and make use of the wonderful new floor markings for movement breaks or simply fun as they make their way in and out of school. Sonic the hedgehog has arrived into the PE hall to allow children demonstrate their Sonic moves! Many thanks to the parents of Ms. Sinnott's class who provided for the floor markings for the whole school to benefit from, using some of the proceeds from the Tractor Run funds! We were delighted to have them in place for the arrival of Ms. Sinnott's parents to their class event so they could see what a difference they have made to the school corridors!

Class of the Month

The month of January has been a long one and so too has the competition for Class of the Month. Long as it was, two classes simply could not be separated and we were delighted to announce that the winners of 'Class of the Month' for January were 4th class and 5th class. They were the delighted recipients of a pizza party, homework pass to be used as decided by themselves and their teacher, and their certificates. Keep an eye out on the noticeboard at the top of the corridor that displays our winners each month! As February and March are both short months, with bank holidays and a midterm break, the weeks will be combined to give an overall winner for February/March. The competition is extremely tight at the moment, with the junior assembly determined to make their mark this month! Let's see if they can do it!

iPads upgrade enhanced with stylus pens

Last month, we were delighted to be able to boast about our enhanced iPads set for the whole class setting as funded by the Piercestown Parents' Association. This month, we are able to add, that as a result of further funds by Ms. Sinnott's class from their tractor run, each iPad is now the proud partner of a stylus pen! This further increases the usability and accessibility of the iPads at all class levels. First to make the most of the stylus pens, were 4th, 5th and 6th class who actually used the iPads and stylus pens to design the cover of their comic books! Wait until you see them! Impressive does not even encapsulate the success of this project and this could not have happened without these enhanced resources!

Pancake Tuesday

Piercestown National School could have been mistaken for a bakery or creperie on Tuesday 21st February, as the smell of pancakes wafted through the corridors. Some classes watched webinars on making pancakes or did some procedural writing before the staff whipped out their flour, eggs, and pans and the pancake flipping began!!! There is amazing photographic evidence of the fun had by all. Keep an eye on the blog for an update soon!
<https://piercestownns.com/>

Ash Wednesday

Well done to 6th class, 2nd class and Ms. Sinnott's class who represented the school so well at mass on Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of lent. Ms. Walsh returned from mass with ashes for the other pupils who wished to avail of them and brought with them, the words of Fr. Aodhán in his mass that morning. Many of the children have decided to 'take things on' in place of 'giving things up' over the next few weeks. We look forward to making our journey through lent with the children as we head towards the most important time in the Catholic Church, that of Easter.

Sacraments

The countdown is on to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and preparation in Ms. Sinnott's and Ms. Farrell's class is well underway. As mentioned above, the children attended mass for Ash Wednesday alongside our 6th class and their behaviour and prayerful participation was commendable. All classes are working hard in their preparation as they continue their journey towards their special days. Ms. Sinnott's and Ms. Farrell's classes are currently in full flow preparing for their First Confession which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 8th March.

Clothes for Cash – Parents' Association

Many thanks to the Parents' Association who brought the 'Clothes for Cash' initiative to Piercestown N.S. in the last week. It encouraged many of us to empty out the wardrobes and engage in a good 'spring clean' and in doing so, giving clothes to people in less favourable positions than ourselves while simultaneously raising some funds for our school. Special word of thanks to Steph Quigley and Karina Cadogan who spearheaded the event. It was a hugely successful event with over 1000kg of clothes being donated! This raised over €300 for the school which will cover the cost of an event later in the year for the children!

New Member to the ISM team – Welcome Mrs. Larkin

In accordance with circular 44/2019, an additional In-school management position was available among the teaching staff at Piercestown N.S. Following the completion of the process, the Board of Management are delighted to appoint Mrs. Larkin to join the ISM team, comprising of Ms. Walsh, Mrs. Corrigan, Ms. Hearne and Ms. Sinnott! Welcome to the team Mrs. Larkin, we look forward to working with you.

A Word from the Principal

While we might have been forgiven for feeling January long, February was gone in the blink of an eye! The extra bank holiday this year was upon us before we knew where we were, followed by the midterm break. But, we could not be accused of resting on our laurels, the short month saw the announcement of the Students' Council elections, the announcement of the opening of our second ASD class in September 2023, plans for the revival of the Annual Art Exhibition and the return of Rackard league and Mini 7s! Phew! I am almost exhausted thinking of how we managed to fit all that into a short period of time. With the imminent arrival of the much loved Book Fair, there is great excitement in the air. We can't wait for all that lies ahead in the coming weeks. The Board of Management will be meeting again on March 14th as we put our shoulders to the wheel to ensure all facilities and staffing will be in place, following our announcement at the start of the month. We thank you in advance for your patience and understanding as we work our way through the next few months with this exciting challenge.

"The best preparation for good work tomorrow is to do good work today." - Elbert Hubbard

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- World Book Day Thursday 2nd March
- Scholastic Bookfair will arrive to the school on 2nd March to the 9th March 2023
- Book fair evening event – Monday 6th March 6.30pm – 8pm
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (First Confession) 8th March 2023 7pm
- Board of Management Meeting 14th March
- Lá Gaeilge 16th March 2023

- School closed Fri 17th March and Monday 20th March 2023
- Odd Socks Day March 21st 2023
- Daffodil Day Fundraiser 22nd and 23rd March 2023
- Purple Day – March 26th 2023
- World Autism Day is officially 2nd April – as we are on holidays this will be held on Thursday 30th March 2023
- School will close for Easter holidays on Fri 31st March for Easter holidays and reopen on Monday 17th April 2023