



Welcome to the second edition of the Piercestown Post for the school year 2023-2024. We literally hit the ground running in October with a month full of fun teaching and learning, creativity, problem solving and 'groundbreaking' events. With the clock having changed, winter has officially landed. The days are short (and often very wet!) and the evenings are long with darkness kicking in early. If you have a few minutes to spare, grab a cup, put the feet up and catch up with us on the last few weeks!

Modular Update

At the time of our last newsletter, fencing had been put in place and we were waiting (impatiently) for the next move. October 19th was a day to remember for the children. Maths Week was in full flight and suddenly there was Maths literally everywhere on the back court. How many pieces was the modular made of? What weight could the crane hold? What time did the crane and the modular first land? How long did it take to put together? The children were literally in awe as they saw part of our history in the making as our first modular build took place before their very eyes. Even the staff were mesmerised by the action. So that you get to share it with us, I shared a video on Aladdin, and it is on the blog for all to see too. In the meantime, Ms Sinnott and I took some time to visit a mirror image of our exact build in a nearby school at a near completion stage! But the big question on all our lips is 'when is the handover date?' Our sources at the minute tell us early December. We will keep you posted as the next week or two progresses. Work has continued over the midterm and at present the team appear to be on track. The Knockinghall Community hall remains home to 6th class for the coming weeks but it won't be long before we welcome them home! If you missed the video, check out the link to the blog <https://piercestownns.com/category/principal/>

Special welcome to our new pupils

A special word of welcome to three new pupils who joined us on Monday 6th November. We welcome Sophia, Christopher and Matthew to our school. We look forward to getting to know them and we have no doubt that all of the children and staff will do their best to make them feel very welcome as they settle into their new school with us.

Congratulations to our Artist Finalist

Huge congratulations to Kate in 2nd class who reached the final in the 'Artist of the Year' competition organised by the Tallbot Hotel. The prize giving ceremony took place on Saturday 4th November and Ms Walsh was on hand to see Kate's beautiful drawing on show for all to see. Congratulations to Kate for receiving her award and for representing our school so well.

Projected Enrolment – Welcome to our newest staff member

Following on from last month's newsletter, the Dept finally gave the go ahead and with the fastest timeline that was possible, interviews took place over the midterm break. I am delighted to welcome, on behalf of the Board of Management and Piercestown School community, Mr Lehané to our team. Mr Lehané is an experienced teacher having spent the last number of years working in a school in Wexford town. He brings with him an abundance of experience and we look forward to welcoming him into our team and our school community, and we hope that he has many fruitful years with us. As per previous correspondence, Mr Lehané currently has no base classroom to work in, so he will be operating in a team-teaching capacity. We are delighted to embrace this rare opportunity to reduce pupil teacher ratio in some of our larger classrooms and give children an enhanced opportunity in the coming months.

Piercestown Parents' Association

Our amazing Piercestown Parents' Association can never be accused of becoming complacent. They are always full of new ideas and opportunities. As a result of a conversation last year, the idea was born to hold a 'Halloween Costumes Sale' where all proceeds would go to Knockingall Community Centre. The parents were blown away by the appetite for the event with donations of €2 being made for each costume purchased and it was a resounding success. On Friday 27th October, our treasurer Suzanne Connolly handed over a cheque for €200 to the committee who were hugely appreciative of this donation. Many thanks to all involved, those who donated costumes, those who hosted and those who bought. Rumour has it the wheels are in motion for a similar 'Christmas Jumper' event. Watch this space!

Maths Week 2023

Maths week 2023 did not disappoint! Having attended training for the new Maths Curriculum the previous week, I spoke to the children about the wonderful teaching and learning experiences that are taking place in our school. If I could have recorded many of the moments of Maths week alone, I think the Dept would have wondered if we had an insight into the *NEW* Maths curriculum training, as much if not all of what they proposed and aspire to, was recreated in Maths Week 2023. From hands on learning, to Maths talk, to positive dispositions to maths and the use of technology, the list could go on. Events such as Problem of the Day, shared Maths activities, Bingo for infants, Bingo over zoom, Monster Maths quiz, 'Tables bee' champion, Countdown Champion made it a 'Mathstastic' week. Big shout out to Leah Healy who was crowned the Table Bee champion for the fourth year running in her event! Now there is a challenge set for next year as Leah heads off to secondary school and throws open the competition for all. As parents you would be so proud to see all the children engage and interact and 'give things a go'. For fun, the week before midterm on Oct 26th we hosted a prize giving for our 'Problem of the Day' winners, winners of the various events, winner of the 'Guess the Sweets in the Jar – congratulations to James Devereux with his guess of 250 – just three sweets off the actual total, and to Jack Sunter for guessing the 'Weight of the pumpkin'.

Weeks like this do not happen by chance and certainly not to the standard that took place. Special thanks to ALL of the staff and pupils for their involvement. Special thanks to the committee who did Trojan work behind the scene, Ms Hearne for her Countdown and Tables bee hosting, Ms Taylor for ensuring we had 'problems' each day, Mr Murphy and Ms Sinnott with their dance moves, (who thought Maths could involve dancing?!) and many more staff who went above and beyond to ensure our Maths Week was a great success! A highlight for me professionally was seeing older children teach younger children and vice versa. With October under our belts, we get to look forward to embracing the scientists inside of us as Science Week approaches this month.

National Lámh Day

National Lámh Day 2023 took place on 18th October 2023. This year's theme was 'lámh for living' and our school community made a video to share with you all to demonstrate our daily efforts to follow this mantra. Special thanks to Fiona, our lámh tutor (how lucky our school is to have this talent and experience) who is instrumental in keeping us all up to speed, affirming our efforts (which may be less than perfect at times) and continuing our journey to share lámh within all our classes throughout our school. If you missed the video on the day, why not go to the following link, scroll down our page a bit and check it out. <https://piercestownns.com/>

Communication for Parents – Aladdin Connect

Many thanks to all new parents and existing parents who have signed up to Aladdin Connect. We will be using 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 2023 – Hybrid Approach Week of 21st November *

As per the text sent out on Friday 3rd November, PT meetings will be scheduled with the majority **taking place the week of the 20th of November. Provisionally, we are blocking off Tuesday 21st and Thursday 23rd that week.** Last year, we also offered a hybrid approach to parent teacher meetings for people who might find it difficult to make it to the school. Our communication will start this week to establish the interest level in this and then opening time slots for scheduling meetings via Aladdin Connect as always. We look forward to welcoming you all in and updating you on how your children have settled back into the school year and answer any queries that you may have.

Christmas Card Creations!

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 personal way. **The card samples will be due to return to the school shortly. The card sample will be sent home in the coming weeks, 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 contain 10 cards and costs €8, with €3 per pack coming to the school as a fundraiser. Well done to all the boys and girls on their wonderful Christmas cards.

Class of the Month October 2023

Class of the month for October will be announced at the November assembly scheduled to take this week. Word has it, it was a close call in the lead up to the final scores before midterm. Who will follow in the footsteps of third class, or will indeed third class retain their title for a second month in a row? Watch this space!

Gymnastics is back!

Gymnastic coach Tommy and his team will return to our school for a six-week block starting this Thursday Nov 9th. This will be an opportunity for all classes (except 3rd who are busy swimming this term) to engage in all aspects of gymnastics of the Physical Education curriculum. The children are looking forward to gymnastics coaching very much. A reminder to wear appropriate clothing and shoes every Thursday. More information about the gymnastics coaching will be sent out via Aladdin tomorrow.

Beginning of Year Service - Friday 13th Oct.

The Beginning of year service took place on Friday 13th October. Many thanks to all those who attended and/ or tuned in. Apologies to those who had to relocate to the gallery, we literally were a tight squeeze as a school community downstairs. It was so wonderful to be together and I am sure you will agree, it was a lovely experience for our entire school community. The music, poetry, and use of lámh warmed the hearts of all who witnessed it. Special word of thanks to Fr Aodhán who goes above and beyond to make our children feel so special and our staff feel so appreciated for all that they do. We look forward to future events and hope to have a date for our annual evening Christmas Carol service soon.

Jersey Day - Friday 13th Oct

As per last month's newsletter, this year we hosted our jersey day on Fri 13th, with all proceeds going to our past pupil Evan Jones and the Ronald McDonald Charity. The generosity of our school community is second to none and a grand total of €969 was raised. We look forward to sending the money to Evan's family to present to the Ronald McDonald charity and well done to all the boys and girls and staff for wearing their jerseys. They were some lovely photos taken on the day and these photos are up on the school blog for all to see. The only tinge of disappointment was that Sat 14th saw our World Cup journey come to a heartbreaking end but what a journey it was. Without hope, there wouldn't be disappointment, but we look forward to more good times ahead following our amazing sporting role models!

Speaking of Sporting Role Models

As we geared up to have no homework on Tuesday 24th for the fireworks, there was further reason to celebrate a day early on Monday 23rd of October with the arrival of our own local heroes, the St. Martin's Senior Camogie team who had been crowned County Champions on Saturday when they defeated Oulart. The hall was awash with maroon and white, and Queen was singing 'We are the Champions' as our team arrived. It is so inspirational for our children and staff to witness so many past pupils return to showcase their silver ware and talk to the children about how to get the opportunity to play in a final someday. Many thanks to Jim Dempsey, the Chairman and Maura O Connor, James Flynn and Amy Ryan, the management team, for taking the time to join us with the players! Special thanks to the captain Ciara O'Connor for sharing her words of wisdom too. We had music, speeches, photo opportunities and the icing on the cake was the announcement by Amy O'Leary, vice-captain, that there would be NO HOMEWORK in Piercestown NS to celebrate!!

REMINDER: Hairbrushes at the ready! School Photographer - Image Masters – CHEESE! - 8th November 2023

We have booked our photographers into school on November 8th to take official individual photos of our newest members of school, Junior Infants and Ms Sinnott's class. There will of course be the option of siblings and junior infant photos too. As we completed individual and sibling photos for all classes last year, we will repeat this next year and instead skip straight to having the group photos taken for this school year. In this way, we hope to reduce costs on people, in the knowledge that individual photos are taken every second year should people wish to avail of them. We will send you a reminder text tomorrow about the photographer!

Enrolment for the school year 2024 2025 is opening this week!

It is hard to believe but enrolment for the next school year will commence this week. Keep an eye on the blog for the Admissions notice. We will also be announcing the Open Night date in the coming weeks, scheduled to take place in the next few weeks for those who have a child due to start school next year.

A Message from Debbie and the Team: SUNNY DAYS AFTERSCHOOL - CHANGES TO COLLECTION PROCEDURES

As 3 pm is the busiest time for us in Afterschool with Infant children being collected, infant children staying on for the afternoon and senior children from 1st class up arriving, we have decided to make some changes to our collection procedures. Going forward ***from Monday the 6th of November all children from 3rd class to 6th class will be asked to go directly from their class to the hall at 3pm.*** Prior to Covid this is the way that the older children came to After school daily and after reviewing the system we currently have in place we feel that re-instating this procedure will help to ensure the smooth running of our service going forward. We would be grateful if parents could remind their children of this change over the first week or two, we will ensure that there is a staff member outside to re direct any children who may forget over the first couple of weeks. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued custom and co-operation. Without you, the parents and children, there would be no Sunny Days.

Green Schools are back in action!

Miss Ryan and the Green Schools committee are back in action this year and we are working on our first year - year one of two – of the **Global Citizenship; Marine Environment flag.**

This year we welcome two new members from third class – Jamie and Lorna who replace our two sixth class girls who moved on this September. Jamie and Lorna join our current members; Donagh, Emily, Lily, Annmarie, Jessica and Lucy. The team got straight to work and informed the school classes of an upcoming Marine Spatial Planning (Art) competition; *'What I'd like to See for the Sea'*. Stay tuned to our blog section on the website for further updates.

Sporting update from Mr Murphy

We're thrilled to announce the fantastic achievement of our boys' team in the recent quarter-final match against Rathangan in the Rackard League. With determination and teamwork, our boys emerged victorious, securing a well-deserved win 2-10 to 2-5.

In preparation for their success, our boys have been putting in the effort, even during the mid-term break, with training sessions twice during their time off. Their commitment and dedication have truly paid off and hopefully in the semi final v Bree this Wednesday.

Additionally, the excitement continues with the conclusion of the lunchtime league group games. Now, it's time to gear up for the thrilling knock-out games, where our boys and girls from 4th to 6th will showcase their skills. Let's wish them the best of luck in the upcoming matches!

Girls Rackard League: Update from Ms Hearne and Ms Sheehan

On October 11th our Rackard league girls team took on an unbeaten Kilmore side in their quarter final. The girls got off to a flying start, dominating possession and coming in at the break leading by 6 points. It was more of the same for the first half of the second half with them stretching their lead out to 8 points with 10 minutes remaining and playing some great football. However, Kilmore were not going to give up without a fight and fight back they did. It took some great last grasp defending and a lot of determination and a bit of good luck to ensure we progressed to the next stage. We all breathed a sigh of relief on hearing the final whistle as Kilmore blasted a final effort over to bar to leave us one point to the good. We were pitted against Blackwater in the semi-finals but unfortunately due to the weather we had throughout most of October and unplayable pitches this has been postponed until after the midterm break. It is now fixed for next Tuesday the 7th of November in Killurin at 3pm. Training continued throughout November and over midterm and we are still dreaming of going one better than last year where we lost to Bree in the final. St. Martins Abú!

Mini 7's and Lunchtime League

As mentioned in our September issue the girls also booked their place in Round 2 of the Mini 7s competition, but this also was delayed due to the weather and will now take place on Thursday the 16th of November where we will play Kilmore and Kilrane. Our lunchtime league knockout stages also fell foul of the bad weather, and we look forward to

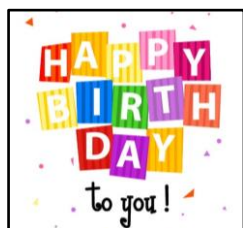
hosting these when we return. Every team is still in with a chance of taking home the Daithí Waters Cup and it is great to see so many boys and girls, experienced and beginners, take to the field together to enjoy playing football and it is obvious to any observer the improvement as we progress through the competition.

Chess: Who will be the next winner on our Eamonn Barrett plaque?

Maths week proved to be the ideal week to get our chess club back up and running and it was great to see so many players choose to spend their break time playing chess and learning new moves. We look forward to beginning our in-school chess competition in November. Every child from 3rd to 6th will take part and over a number of weeks they will all play at least 8 games of chess before we crown our chess Champion of 2023/2024. The league table of results will also pick our school chess teams for the Ficheall competition where our teams, the Buds (3rd and 4th) and Masters (5th and 6th) will try their skills against other chess teams from across the county. So please dust off the chess boards, take advantage of the darker evenings and the bad weather and get practising!!

Big Birthday Shout Outs - November!

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Ella from Junior infants; Scarlett, Dylan, Reuben and Kate from Senior Infants; Cara, Leo, Donnacha and Nora from 1st class; Karyna, Beau and Eve from 2nd class; Francis, Eoin and Myah from 3rd class; CJ and Katie from 4th class; Kiara and Dylan from 5th class; Kelly and Anastasiia from 6th class. We hope you all enjoy your special day!!!



*“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday dear Ella, Scarlett, Dylan, Reuben, Kate, Cara, Leo,
Donnacha, Nora, Karyna, Beau, Eve, Francis, Eoin, Myah,
CJ, Katie, Kiara, Dylan, Kelly and Anastasiia
Happy birthday to you.”*

Halloween Fun! Costumes at the Ready for Friday 27th October

October brought with it so much fun with the penultimate day for the children being the much loved ‘Freaky Friday’. Word has it Ms Walsh was most afraid of the weather as opposed to any of the ghost, ghouls and strange creatures that showed up. While some of us got rained on as we made our way to school, thankfully the weather did nothing to ‘dampen’ our spirits and the day was a huge success. The DJ in the PE hall was a firm favourite with Princess Fiona, Johnny Sexton, Shrek, Jessie from Toy story, Snow White, and over 230 dressed up children bringing out their ‘best moves’. Well done to everyone for taking part. As always, the standard of costumes was amazing and for fun, each class either randomly selected or democratically voted for their favourite on the day. Well done to Ada, Tilly, Ben, Beau, Cara, Aodhán, Nicole and Kate and Isaac for their awards! Ms Walsh would also like to thank Trinity and Abbie (A.K.A. the builders) for their work on the modular that day! 10 out of 10 for tapping into our school life for your costume! See our school blog for photos of the winners and our Freaky Friday video! <https://piercestownns.com/>

Primary Curriculum Framework – Maths Inservice for staff – School closure date to be announced

Following on from the training attended by myself and Ms Hearne, the next step in the roll out of the Primary Maths curriculum is a training day for all staff. This requires the school to be closed for a day. At present, the communication we have received has indicated that the date will be in term 2 (post Christmas) or term 3. We have been told that an actual date will be confirmed in the coming weeks. As always, as soon as we have the date, it will be shared with the wider school community. Many thanks for your cooperation as always.

Upcoming Elections for the Board of Management 2023-2027

Following on from step one of the process for the election of parents emailed to all on October 16th, step two will take place this week by email also. I would like to thank the current Board who continue to work so hard in their remaining weeks, recently with the recruitment of our ninth teacher and the arrival of our modular build! Your time and effort is so greatly appreciated.

Online book club

Our new Scholastic Book Club will be **up and running this Wednesday November 8th!** The brochure for the Setanta online book club will be available online. Many thanks to Siobhán in the office who facilitates this operating in our school. Go to <https://schools.scholastic.ie/s-n-baile-an-phiarsaigh/digital-book-club> to browse the latest books and order online. For every €1 you spend on this month's Book Club, our school will earn 20c in Scholastic Rewards. Please place your order online by November 16th. As like the last order around Christmas time, should anyone wish to order online but would like us to keep them in the office for collection, please drop Siobhán an email (siobhan@piercestownns.com) /phone the office and she can hold them there.

Folens Christmas Annuals

You will have received a noticeboard about our Folens Christmas Annuals today. We are planning on ordering Christmas Annuals from Folens this year. Attached please find the flyer for your perusal. The cost per annual is €3.00 and comes with a pencil/pen whichever is class appropriate. I would be grateful if you could reply to this noticeboard if you are interested in purchasing one with your child's name and class in order to determine which annual is required by Thursday 9th November.

Garda vetting appeal – We would love to hear from you!

As a school community, we love to involve our parents when opportunities arise. To do so, we are legally required to have any parents who wish to be involved Garda vetted. Following on from the global pandemic, the number of garda vetted parents reduced significantly. We are appealing for parents to come forward to be garda vetted so that we can revitalise many of our much-enjoyed experiences such as Maths activities, shared reading, school tours and in-class events. With your support we can do so much more. To be garda vetted, please ring the office on 0539158854 or drop us an email on piercestownns@gmail.com to access a form. It really is a simple process and we would greatly appreciate it.

A Word from the Principal

The start of the new school year has been an overwhelming success on a settling in front for our new pupils and staff and an impressive start to teaching and learning. We are delighted to be welcoming three more pupils and one more staff member and watching our school continue to grow. The Board of Management continues to work away behind the scenes as their four-year term comes to an end on November 30th. With that said, I would like to personally and professionally thank Fr Aodhán, Brid, Seán, Gráinne, Keith, George, and Julie for their support, hard work, wisdom, calmness, integrity, and commitment over the last four years. I could not sum up all their work in this last four-year term as so much has happened. I certainly, could not do my job without their presence and support – so on behalf of the entire school community a huge, huge thank you. From me personally, I don't have the words to effectively acknowledge ALL of what you have done. They say 'that the strength of a team is each individual member and the strength of each member is the team'. Thanks for being *my strength* (and support) for the last four-year period. I am forever grateful for the progress our school has made under your management and it was an honour to be part of such a wonderful team.

"It is literally true that you can succeed best and quickest by helping others to succeed" – Napoleon Hill

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- Mindful Monday November 6th 2023
- Image Masters 8th November 2023
- Gymnastics starts November 9th 2023 (all classes except 3rd class)
- Science Week – 12th- 19th November 2023
- MMR 4-in-1 Jun infants - 22nd November 2023

- Parent teacher meetings – Tues 21st November and Thursday 23rd November 2023
- Confirmation – Friday 10th May 2024
- First Confession – TBC
- First Communion – Saturday 25th May 2024