

Welcome to the eighth edition of the Piercestown Post for the school year 2023-2024. With Easter being early this year, we were back up and running for our final term at the start of April. The children were eager to return with the prospect of 'hot dinners' in school and the excitement that term three always holds with the return of rounders and cricket to school tours and better weather (we hope!). It is hard to believe that we have a month under our belt since our return! 6th class are shaping up for the final chapter in primary school and Junior infants are getting ready to make way for the arrival of the 'new kids on the block'. While summer has technically arrived, we aren't parting with the jumpers and jackets just yet. So, the reading of this month's newsletter might still warrant feet up and a warm cuppa to see what we have been up to.



World Autism Awareness Day – Blue Day

World Autism awareness day took place on April 2nd while we were on our Easter break. Never to miss an occasion however, we held our 'blue' day on April 9th. Having opened our second class for children with autism in September 2023 and supporting children within our mainstream classes with autism, we wanted to celebrate in style. There was a sea of blue to be seen across the grounds of our school. Lots of 'blue' activities took place in many classrooms and a sensory disco and sensory messy play session took place with our team. Our school prides itself in being an inclusive school that is 'autism friendly'. Videos were shared throughout the school all about autism and we celebrated in all classrooms! To take a glimpse into how the day went, go to <https://piercestownns.com/>

65 Roses Day

Our school recently came together to commemorate 65 Roses Day in support of cystic fibrosis (CF) awareness on April 12th. This special day holds significant meaning for our community. Through various fundraising efforts and activities, our school community rallied together to raise an impressive €355. Every euro contributed will play a crucial role in improving the provision of dedicated CF facilities. The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the whole school community walking a collective distance of 65,000 steps, symbolising our united commitment to raising awareness for CF. With each step taken, we reaffirmed our dedication to making a positive impact and standing in solidarity with those affected by CF. Many thanks to Ms Sheehan and Shelly for taking the lead on this special day. To see us 'get our purple on', go to <https://piercestownns.com/>

Hot Meals kicked off

The excitement at the end of term two about the introduction of hot meals at school was palpable. While our initial start date of 8th April was delayed, Ms Walsh was able to reassure the children at our first assembly when we returned, that the electrics for the big ovens had taken place over the Easter break and the start line was in sight. Lo and behold, we kicked off on April 22nd! The feedback to date has been very positive. The system put in place by school from February to Easter regarding eating time ensured that the arrival of hot meals was extremely smooth! We are delighted to welcome Karen from FRESH today to our school daily and she has ensured that the delivery of our meals has been flawless from the get-go even ensuring that our players get fed early as required on match days! At the minute, we are sending a reminder each week to help parents remember to complete the change of order by 6pm on Thursday! Well done to many of the boys and girls who have tasted 'new foods' that they may not have been familiar with before! We look forward to continuing our journey with FRESH today!

Schools Athletics Day 2024!

Speaking of 'starting' lines, our much-loved annual school's athletics day will take place in Enniscorthy on Tuesday May 21st. We were delighted to welcome Ms Hearne back to our school family and she was straight into all things sports related! This week Ms Hearne had hoped to start the selection process, but the weather 'rained' us off. So next week, we will send a reminder to have the children wear their runners and sports gear so we can hopefully get the selection process across the line.

Marine Day – Green Schools Update

As part of Marine Week and further work towards our next flag – ‘Global Citizenship – Marine Environment’, Wednesday 17th April saw the Green Schools Committee hosting our own Marine Day and raising awareness for Marine Life and how we are affecting our oceans. The classes were treated to presentations from all the Green School members – Jessica and Lucy presented their project on Marine Litter. Lily and Annmarie shared the results from our plastic free lunch day and provided the classrooms with some interesting statistics and information. Donagh and Emily from fourth class provided an informative presentation on Climate Change and the effect it is having on our oceans. Jamie and Lorna from third class did themselves proud presenting their first ever project to all the classrooms; they chose the theme of overfishing. Each class then had age-appropriate lessons and puzzles to complete to finish off the day and everybody learned something new! Many thanks to Mrs Ryan who continues to ensure we keep our green schools alive and kicking!

Piercestown Parents’ Association – Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free’

Since the launch of the guidelines for parents and parents’ associations in November 2023, many school are exploring the concept of ‘keeping childhood smartphone free’ in their communities. Most recently, St. Joseph’s National School in Bree, has become one of the first schools in Wexford to embrace this concept. Our Parents’ Association are being very proactive and wish to explore this concept with you the school community. This involves getting the voices of the pupils, staff and you the parents. You will have received a flyer with some information about an upcoming survey and a meeting for sharing our results! All parents are welcome to this on **Tuesday May 21st at 8pm**. Come along to have your voice heard!

Food Dudes back for one week only April 29th-May 2nd inclusive

We were excited to introduce the Food Dudes healthy eating programme to our school community during the 29th of April to the 2nd of May! Designed to promote healthy eating habits, contributing to children's overall wellness, Food Dudes encourages children to explore a variety of fruits and vegetables, fostering a positive relationship with nutritious foods from an early age. Children tasted a range of different fruit and veg including peppers, tomatoes, apples, bananas and carrots. Well done to all of the children who participated in this initiative.

Rackard league updates – knock out stages

An update from Ms Sheehan

The Rackard League girls’ team have been training hard this month including during their Easter break. The girls played their quarter final against Rosslare on Tuesday the 29th of April. The game was played in St. Mary’s GAA pitch Rosslare in dry but windy conditions. At half time, the Rosslare girls left St. Martins scoreless with a scoreline of 1:1 to no score. In the last ten minutes of the game Cora scored a goal which rattled the back of the net, raising the team's spirits. The team did not shy away from the challenge that was ahead of them, with grit and determination the St. Martin’s girls scored two goals in the last three minutes of the game! The last strike of the ball came from Meabh with the winning goal. The St. Martins girls won the game by one point. The final score was 2:2 to 3:0. The team's resilience, perseverance and determination was admirable. Well done girls! We look forward to the challenge which the semi-final will bring in May.

An update from Mr Murphy

April has been an action-packed month for our school's sports teams, with thrilling victories and heart-pounding matches. Our hurlers kicked off the month of April with dedication, attending two intense training sessions over the Easter break, gearing up for the games ahead including mini 7's and a goal to try reach a second consecutive Rackard league hurling final. Despite our best efforts, however the journey in the mini 7s competition came to a close after a nail-biting one-point loss to Rathangan. Though the result may not have been in our favour, the effort and sportsmanship displayed by our players throughout the two games was truly commendable. In the Rackard league the boys showcased their skills and determination, securing impressive wins against Barntown and Rathangan. All this hard work and commitment paid off, propelling them to the quarter-finals where they faced tough competition from Blackwater. On a very breezy day, our boys rose to the occasion, claiming a hard fought win after a tight first half and advancing to a semifinal with legacy rivals Oulart. We travelled to Bree for a momentous semifinal against long-time rivals Oulart. We began the game well scoring 3 points to no reply. The effort the boys have been putting into training lately evident. Then just as it seemed we were in control a goal from out of nowhere rocked us followed by another

two points for a growing in confidence Oulart team. It became tit and tat then with both teams showing tremendous skill and play with some huge collisions for the sliotar. However just before the half time whistle a ball from deep ended up in our goal and left us 6 points down at half time. In the second half the boys upped their intensity and slowly began clawing back the deficit and when we finally got a goal to bring it back to a point game the feeling was momentum had changed. In fairness to Oulart they regained their composure and never allowed us to get any closer and even with a few scares around their goal, we could not take advantage. The boys made our school proud by the effort, skill, and sportsmanship they showed on the field. In Rising stars the boys had a tremendous win in Cushinstown to propel them into the next round too. On a very mixed weather-wise day the rising stars showed their talent and pushed past a very good Cushinstown side. We are incredibly proud of each and every member of the hurling panels who give up their time for trainings and matches for this year. With lunchtime league hurling soon to start and the end of the hurling 365 for the senior group it has been a great couple of months for hurling in the school.

Hurling 365 Piercestown NS style Senior end

After the run of bad weather pre-Easter, there was great appetite to get our Hurling 35 up and running for the senior end of the school. Ms Hearne arrived back into the mix too and there was a great buzz of hurling around the place. It was timely with all the Rackard league outings! Well done to all the boys and girls who were up and at it early every Wednesday before school. Special shout out to the Hurling 365 team, Ms Sheehan, Mr Murphy, Mr Lehane, Ms Roche, Ms Lehane, Pat Quigley and Ms Hearne. It is now time for the team to take a break from hurling 365 as we shape up for the other activities that lie ahead in term.

Camán Everybody for Junior Infants

On Tuesday 30th April, our local St Martin's club members along with our participation officer Tom and local community member Vanessa Kirby were on site to present our junior infant class with their 'camán's'. The 'Camán Everybody' programme focuses on the introduction of the basic fundamental skills of hurling. With our infants having completed their block of hurling 365 with the Piercestown staff, the boys and girls were already ahead of the game! Many thanks to Vanessa Kirby and the Kirby family who sponsor the purchasing of the 'camáns' in memory of their brother and past pupil Michael Kirby. Thanks to Mick O Connell for representing the club on the day. Special shout out to Suzanne who volunteered to attend all our hurling 365 sessions for the junior end of the school. Suzanne has offered continuous support to our GAA links with our local club St. Martin's over the last number of years and her efforts are greatly appreciated!

Annual Art Exhibition

Piercestown National School was transformed into an art gallery since our return at Easter. On April 25th, the launch of our annual Art Exhibition took place in our school hall, led by local artist Helen Gaynor with our amazing Parents' Association on hand to offer light refreshments. The art was amazing and ranged from 2-D art to 3-D art, with many different materials resulting in displays the length and breadth of the corridors and PE hall. Our local artist Helen, spent a lot of time perusing the art and the children listened with great excitement to hear if their name would be called out with some description of their art. Many thanks to all the staff who ensure that the teaching of art allows for this wonderful, inclusive exhibition which is now part of the tradition of our school. We were delighted to explain how the process of art was used by the pupils to design our very own school crest this year and we cannot wait to see this across all elements of our school. For a further glimpse into the night itself, please go to the school website www.piercestownns.com We were also lucky to have Wexford People photographer, Jim Campbell, there on the night so we can look forward to seeing ourselves in the local paper next week! Thanks to Mrs Corrigan and Mrs Larkin for leading this event. We hit double digits this year with this being our 10th event! We look forward to continuing this much-loved tradition in our school for years to come.

School tours 2024!

Term three brings with it school tours season! What can be better for children, than the excitement of a big bus or heading off to enjoy a day out with all their friends! Huge thanks to Siobhán who was working hard behind the scenes since January to ensure destinations and transport could be booked! The school tours were recently ratified at our Board meeting on April 16th. All will be revealed in the coming days! We hope to open payments in the coming days

also to facilitate parents who might wish to pay in instalments. We look forward to making more memories with the children!

Cricket to begin!

The return of Herbie and Peter from Cricket Ireland is always a welcome addition to our summer season. Cricket is a most enjoyable sport for all children and one of the most inclusive sports that exists. 5th and 6th class take part in a series of 4 weeks which usually ends in a local derby against our neighbours Murrintown. Herbie and Peter will also feature in our Active Week timetable! Many thanks to Cricket Ireland for their contribution. It has become a much-enjoyed sport in our summer season!

Soccer to return!

Tommy from the FAI will return to Piercestown NS to teach 'soccer' and the correct 'soccer rules'. This year his expertise will be shared with 1st, 2nd and 3rd class for the summer season. Tommy will begin on Tues 14th May for 5 weeks. We look forward to Tommy and his team sharing their expertise and the real rules of soccer (which can sometimes be subject to strong debate at breaktimes!).

Ms Hearne's room go swimming

Towels at the ready?! Not quite beach towel season, but Ms Hearne returned to a new set of swimming lessons for her class. Following on from their life skills of previous years, Ms Hearne's class are taking part in a series of six weeks of swimming lessons. This year our swimming instructor is Nadine Lambert. The class are building on their skillset from previous years. Huge thanks to Mr Lehan, Ms Hearne, Fiona, and Niamh who have been the accompanying swimming team over the six-week block!

Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWS) programme

Under the aquatics strand of the primary school Physical Education curriculum, Ms Lehan (a swimming instructor herself) is leading the way for classes to take part in the PAWS programme. This is a programme that allows basic water safety skills to be taught in every classroom throughout our school. Upon completion of the programme, classes will receive their PAWS certificate. With the summer season upon us (hard to believe I know!), it is timely to teach this aspect of the PE curriculum to ensure that all our children have at a minimum basic safety and awareness around water. If you are interested in viewing this programme, go to <https://www.teachpaws.ie/>

Class allocation and staffing for next year

This time of year, always brings the conversations both in the corridors and at home about who will teach what classes next year. Next year will see some change in Piercestown NS among staff. We are delighted to offer our congratulations to Ms Taylor who will be on maternity leave- we look forward to hearing all about Ms Taylor's exciting new chapter. Ms Farrell has been granted a career break to enjoy a new chapter for the school year 2024-2025. Ms Lyttleton will return to us in a full-time teaching role and we are delighted to welcome her back. Ms Ryan will continue to job share and her job share partner for the school year 2024-2025 will be Mrs Corrigan. With Mrs Corrigan going job-sharing, the position of acting deputy principal for the year is also to be filled. Pat Quigley has been approved job share in his role as SNA. As interviews have not yet been sanctioned to take place by the Education officer in Ferns, it will not be possible to complete class allocation until this process is complete. So, at present no class allocation can take place. As soon as we are in a position to do so, class allocation will be completed and shared. Many thanks in advance for your understanding and patience.

Rounders throw in!

The summer season is well and truly underway when rounders has kicked off. 5th and 6th class have enjoyed picking up the bat as they got back to training under the direction of Ms Lyttleton, Ms Lehan and Ms Caldicott for the Rackard League Rounders competition. It was a great start with both teams, boys and girls, having comprehensive wins in our first outings against Rosslare N.S. Many thanks to Ms Caldicott for training and coaching the boys and to Ms Lyttleton and Ms Lehan for taking the girls. Without our teachers, we would not be able to enter all the sporting events that

we do at Piercestown N.S. Next up are Wexford CBS. We look forward to bringing you more updates in our next newsletter. Watch this space!

Choir has returned- the hall is alive with the sound of music!

While the PE hall is now home to a wonderful aroma of food, our FRESH today staff member has been afforded many free concerts in preparation for our upcoming sacraments. Ms. Sinnott is back in choir mode and as per each year brings even more new and enjoyable pieces to the fore. The sound is amazing and the children's enjoyment of all things choir related is palpable! We look forward to sharing our talents and hard work at the upcoming sacramental events. Many thanks as always to Ms Sinnott for her musical prowess and for adding to the ambience on the day.

Confirmation

With just one week to go until the big day, it is all systems go in the 6th class classroom. This year, we have the privilege of Bishop Ger Nash officiating at our Confirmation ceremony. No doubt Mr Murphy is looking forward to his first Confirmation class in Piercestown NS also. Many thanks to our 5th class parents who are providing refreshments at an after-ceremony event in our PE hall, that is facilitated and hosted by our brilliant Parents' Association! Thanks to Mr Murphy for all his preparation and work ahead of the big day. We look forward to seeing you all on this special occasion. It might be time to dust off the 'Infant of Prague'.

Holy Communion

2nd class are in full preparation mode for their Holy Communion. They will be taking part in mass each week for the next few weeks, and their big day will take place on Saturday May 25th. If their preparation for the sacrament of first confession is anything to go by, there is no doubt that Saturday May 25th will be exemplary. We hope the children enjoy the lead up to this special occasion also and we look forward to their excitement to come! Many thanks to Fr Aodhan who facilitates this journey with the children and to Ms Sinnott and the choir who truly add to the ambience on the day! Many thanks to the Parents' Association who provide a reception after the ceremony in our school PE hall and we look forward to all that the day brings! Special thanks to Ms Farell and Lena for all their hard work to date! It is greatly appreciated.

Final countdown for 6th class

'Don't count the days, make the days count! The final chapter is one that should hold one or two final memories! Our 6th class are always a credit to the school and their families and as the last few weeks wind down, you often hear staff and other pupils in the school lament the loss of another set of pupils! Eight years is a long time to spend in a place, and it is hard to leave without some mixed emotions. We know however, that most if not all, are ready to fly the nest! But before you go, we wish to enjoy the last few weeks with you and hope that you can make one or two final memories and know that our door always remains open to you. So, while the end is in sight, so too is Confirmation, graduation, rounders matches, 6th class last day traditions (sssssh!) and much more!

Welcome day for Jun infants coming soon!

Junior infants will be making way for the new kids on the block, for one day only (in this school year) on Wednesday 12th June. On this day, our junior infants will kindly vacate their classroom (and use another room while a class go on their school tour) to make way for the arrival of the new junior infants. This will be carried out in two group sessions, to allow us to get to know the new children who arrive. Many thanks to Ms. Lyttleton who will take over as teacher to our junior infants on the day and to Mrs Larkin and Teresa who will work with Ms Walsh to welcome our newest pupils! We look forward to helping our new class of September 2024 get a sense of place on the 12th and hopefully whet their appetite to come running back to 'big school' in September.

Class of the Month – and the winner for March was

It was all to play for with the month of March as it was another short month. The winner was revealed on April 8th at our school assembly, and we were delighted to announce that the worthy winners were Ms. Sheehan and senior infants. There was great excitement at the prospect of the pizza party, and they put their homework pass to great use!

Well done to senior infants. With just two more months up for grabs, the tempo is increasing! The next class of the month for April will be announced on Tuesday when we return after the May bank holiday weekend!

Summer Programme 2024

This year Piercestown NS will once again run 'summer programme' for three weeks in July 1st-19th inclusive. Over the coming days, people will receive offers of invitation to attend. Based on the guidance from the Dept of Education, "*2024 Summer Programme in our school is designed to provide children and young people with opportunities to experience school life in a very supportive way by placing a particular emphasis on enjoyable activities, positive learning and on promoting their self-confidence and wellbeing. Taking part in the programme will support your child to develop their essential skills even further during the summer months in a less formal environment than they would during the school year. The Summer Programme is based on the theme "Building Confidence and Connections". The activities that the staff will organise will provide chances for your child to learn and to develop social and emotional skills. It will provide them with chances to make and develop friendships, improve their confidence about school and learning, and strengthen their familiarity with school layout and routines.* Ms Walsh is busy planning the programme for the summer weeks and looks forward to building on the fun and excitement of previous years.

Big Birthday Shout Outs - May!

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Toddy and Lauryn from Ms. Hearne's class, Ellie, Pearse, Muireann, Éabha and Caoimhe from Junior infants; Ben, Richard and Savannah from 1st class; Archie and Zoe from 2nd class; Veronika, Jack and Niamh from 3rd class; Fionn from 4th class, and Jack and Jane from 6th class. We hope you all enjoy your special day!!!



*"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday dear Toddy, Lauryn, Ellie, Pearse, Muireann, Éabha, Caoimhe, Ben, Richard,
Savannah, Archie, Zoe, Veronika, Jack, Niamh, Fionn, Jack and Jane
Happy birthday to you."*

Agreed report from the Board of Management 16th April

The Board of Management met on 16th April. The following was the agreed report:

- The Board of Management welcomed the arrival of the ICT grant
- Hot Meals scheme will begin Monday 22nd April
- Board of Management will attend training 14th May for new Boards of Management
- School tours are ratified by the Board of Management for this school year
- 6th Class Confirmation to take place 10th May – The Board wishes 6th class all the best for this special occasion
- 2nd Class Communion to take place 25th May- The Board wishes 2nd class all the best for this special occasion
- Annual Art Exhibition will be opened by Helen Gaynor 25th April at 7pm
- The next Board meeting will take place on June 18th 2024

A word from the principal

It is hard to believe that term three is here already. In a matter of weeks, chapters will be completed, new chapters will begin, and a new cohort of pupils will arrive! We were sad to bid farewell to two of our friends Mia and Emilia since our return after Easter and delighted to welcome back Ms. Hearne back to her Piercestown family and friends! Term three always has a lovely buzz to it. We look forward to all that it has in store, and hopefully a bit of sunshine along the way to enhance some of our activities! Our landscape is constantly changing from the physical buildings to curriculum changes in teaching and learning, to practices such as the arrival of hot meals. As a school community we

could never be accused of standing still. The secret to our success is our commitment to teamwork from our pupils to you the parents and our staff. This term is opening discussions on keeping childhood smartphone free facilitated by our Parents' Association. It will see our Board of Management attend further training to continue their hard work behind the scenes. It will see staff continue to facilitate events and activities that the children thrive on in term three. Our 6th class pupil will work to leave their mark and our junior infants have made us so proud over their journey in big school this year. Behind the scenes, we will plan for the end of this year and simultaneously plan for the next school year! We thank you the parents for your continued partnership and support and look forward to seeing you at some events in the coming weeks.

"I'm going to move forward, because going backwards is not an option and standing still is not enough!" – Stacey Abrams

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- Cricket started 30th April x 4 weeks 5th and 6th
- Day off Friday 3rd and Public Holiday Monday 6th May
- Tues 7th May Taster class 4th class Take kwon do
- Confirmation – Friday 10th May 2024 11am
- Week of Standardised testing May 13th
- Tues 21st May School Athletics Day
- First Holy Communion – Saturday 25th May 11am
- 29th May 5th class tour
- Ms Hearne's school tour 30th May
- Sen infant tour Fri 31st May
- June mid-term 3rd- 7th June
- Jun infant tour 11th June
- 3rd class tour Tues 11th June
- Welcome day June 12th new infants
- 6th class tour Wed 12th June
- Ms Sinnott's class Wed 12th June
- 1st class tour Wed 12th June
- 2nd class tour Thurs 13th June
- 4th class tour Fri 14th June
- Active Week 17th – 21st June
- Sports Day 2024 21st June
- Graduation Tues 25th June
- Summer holiday Fri June 28th