



*Welcome to the fourth edition of the Piercestown Post for the school year 2024-2025. December in Piercestown NS is always full of festive fever. From classrooms under elf surveillance, to carol service rehearsals in full flight, it is impossible not to be full of Christmas spirit! While Ms. Walsh thought she had battened down the hatches well, the elves were still in full flight across the school, finishing up on the last day by losing the run of themselves and even spray painting the front windows! Just when Ms. Walsh thought her office had made it safely through the December madness, the last day brought a different story! Hopefully, the break will have offered everyone some recovery time from all the excitement in the lead up. With New Year almost upon us, why not take a few minutes 'me time' and look back to see what your children were up to inside the walls of Piercestown National School this December.*

### **New Build update**

Stage one of the new build is well underway. There have been several meetings and the Board of Management in collaboration with the Design Team are making their way through several drafts to agree on the final drawing that will progress to stage two of the five stage process with the Department of Education. It is an exciting time for the school and communication will be key at all stages. As soon as stage one has been completed, we will share an update with you. Many thanks to members of the Board of Management, staff and school community who continue to support the school on this exciting journey!

### **Science Blast 2025!**

We are thrilled to announce that we our fourth class will 'blast' off 2025, having been accepted into Science Blast at the RDS Dublin on March 3<sup>rd</sup>! The students will be showcasing their investigation into the question of 'how to make water vanish'. This exciting opportunity will allow them to explore science in a hands-on way and share their findings with a wider audience. We look forward to their innovative presentation! We would like to take this opportunity to thanks Ms. Anna Healy who has been on hands for several years now to offer her science expertise to the school and support us in our STEM ventures! No doubt, this 'Science blast' effort will go a long way to securing our STEM application later in the year. Well done to Ms. Sheehan and 4<sup>th</sup> class.

### **Gymnastics was a great success!**

This term, all our classes (except for 3<sup>rd</sup> class who were on their swim term) had the opportunity to take part in gymnastics with our expert coaches. The children gained many exciting skills such as forward rolls, crabs, cartwheels, headstands, while learning about the importance of balance and stretching. They also worked together as a team, combining their individual skills into different routines. It was a wonderful chance for the students to develop both their physical abilities and teamwork skills, all while having fun! With some excellent gymnasts already in the school, we look forward to following their adventures into the future! Word on the street is that Maddi in 4<sup>th</sup> class is the next Simone Biles. Having been truly inspired by the Olympic gymnasts this summer, it is not surprising to see so many young children enjoying this in school activity!

### **Daniel meets Mona McSherry**

Speaking of the Olympics, who could forget the amazing swimmers! Over the last number of years, you will have been following the swimming prowess of our very own Daniel Jordan. Now in 6<sup>th</sup> class, Daniel continues to participate at competitive level and is committed to the training that this involves. We are delighted to share that Daniel had the wonderful opportunity to meet Olympic medallist Mona McSherry in New Ross pool recently. We have no doubt that this inspirational lady will have shared her top tips with all the swimming enthusiasts. Daniel will be hitting the water early in 2025 and representing Piercestown NS in the yearly National Minor Schools Competition in January. Best of, luck Daniel and thank you for continuing to fly our Active flag! This is indeed how the Olympic champions are born into our communities by the commitment and efforts of our youth!

## **Chess**

The in-school chess competition is in full swing, with every child from 3rd to 6th class participating. We've just completed round four, and while some players are on maximum points, the race for places on the school chess teams—the Buds (3rd and 4th class) and Masters (5th and 6th class)—is still wide open. The Ficheall interschool chess competition will take place in early March, and places on the teams are still up for grabs! After Christmas, the competition will move to lunchtimes, with four more rounds to go. The winner will be awarded the Eamonn Barrett Chess Trophy, now in its third year. As we head into the holiday season and the colder weather, it's the perfect time to practice and hone your skills. Keep playing, stay sharp, and remember, every game counts! Let's make the most of the time before the competition resumes in the new year!

## **Stockwell's Christmas Visit**

On Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Sinnott and Ms. Hearne's classes took a magical trip to Stockwell's in Forth Mountain. The children travelled by bus with their teachers and SNAs, excited for the adventure ahead. Upon arrival, they were greeted by the friendly elves who guided them into Mrs. Claus's kitchen, where she was busy cooling Santa's dinner. Next, they met Santa Claus, who amazed everyone by knowing each child's name and was thrilled to hear what they had asked for Christmas. Some children had their faces painted by the elves, adding to the festive fun. After visiting Santa, the children got to pick their own toys from Santa's toy shop. The day continued with a visit to Santa's pet animals, where the children fed the goats and miniature ponies. Before leaving, each child received a special bag of reindeer food to leave out on Christmas Eve. It was a day full of joy and festive magic!

## **Fresh Today Hurling Competition**

The last week of term saw us complete skill three of the Fresh Today Hurling Competition for 3rd and 4th class pupils, testing their accuracy on both their left and right sides. Over 35 children have participated in the first three rounds, showing great enthusiasm and skill. Many thanks to the local GAA club, St. Martins, for sponsoring prizes, including club socks and sliotars, which have helped keep the interest levels high. So far, we've awarded prizes for the first two skills: Ruth for the highest score in Skill One (the high catch), and Christopher and Eoin for their excellent performance in Skill Two (first touch). We also drew two names for participation prizes, with Archie and Levi as the lucky winners. With three more skills to go, we're excited to continue the competition in the new year. We look forward to finding out who will represent our school at the county competition in Wexford Park. Keep practicing, and good luck to all! Many thanks to Ms. Hearne who works relentlessly to promote our GAA games and ensure participation for all children.

## **Handball**

A huge congratulations to the school representatives for the upcoming Handball Rackard League competition, following a competition organised in conjunction with St. Martins Handball Club. A special thank you to Mick Lyng and the club for running this event, which was open to all students from 4th to 6th class. The winners, who will go forward to represent our school in the Rackard League Handball competition in January, are as follows: Under 11 Girls – Kayla (singles) and Amy & Amara (doubles), Under 13 Girls – Ann Marie & Abbie (doubles), Under 11 Boys – Eoin (singles) and Tom & Levi (doubles), and Under 13 Boys – Jack (singles) and Oisín & Dylan (doubles). We're excited to see our talented players compete in the upcoming event and wish them the best of luck! Well done to everyone for their participating in this competition. We will keep you updated on their progress in coming newsletters.

## **6<sup>th</sup> class hoodies coming early new year!**

The decisions have been made, the colours have been chosen and the design has been finalised. Many thanks to Mr Murphy and 6<sup>th</sup> class who have submitted their graduation hoodie order, prior to breaking up for Christmas. We look forward to their arrival early in the new year, so that the children can get as much wear as possible out of the hoodies!

## **Jersey Update – Coming Soon**

2025 is going to be an exciting year all round as our jersey design for our first ever personalised Piercestown NS jerseys has been submitted to O'Neill's for production. Fundraised by our previous Students' Council, we can't wait to get our jersey set that will be used to identify us at our individual events such as Mini 7's hurling, chess, Credit union table

quizzes, Enniscorthy schools' athletics competitions and much more! This will also see our new school crest used! Rumour has it now that this venture has been completed, there are many new ideas for sharing our crest already floating about!

### **Mobile Farm Visit**

From Reptiles to farm animals, the strand of living things has been well and truly embraced in Piercestown NS. This month, we had an amazing visit from Farmer Tom and his wonderful mobile farm! The children were thrilled to meet a variety of friendly farm animals, including Popcorn the goat, Patsy the pig, Daisy the calf, a woolly sheep and a lively group of ducks, geese, and hens. Farmer Tom taught the students all about what the animals like and dislike, how to take care of them on the farm, and what they enjoy eating. The students had the amazing opportunity to pet the animals, ask lots of great questions, and even feed them some hay. It was a fun and educational day full of smiles and laughter – a special experience for everyone!

### **Class of the Month December 2024**

At the time of breaking up for holidays, Ms. Walsh was busy collecting the last scores for December and all will be revealed when we return after the Christmas break at the first assembly in January! Assembly in January has been moved by one week to the second Monday, to allow for classes to settle back in and the children in 3<sup>rd</sup> class and senior infants to show case their 'Gaeilge efforts'. Who will be the winner of the next 'Class of the Month' award?! Watch this space!

### **Christmas Carol Service – Dec 17<sup>th</sup> 7pm in St Martin's Church**

Our much-loved annual event took place on Tuesday December 17<sup>th</sup> in a packed St. Martin's Church at 7pm. As always, it is one of the most anticipated whole school events of the year. The church was literally packed to the rafters and every inch of space on the altar was utilised. A huge thank you to Fr Aodhán and the parish community who supported our preparation for this event, allowing us for the second year in a row to remove the altar in a temporary capacity for comfort levels. This annual event, allows us to take a break from the hectic Christmas season and inhale the true meaning of Christmas, being together, making connections, recalling memories and making new ones. If we could bottle the 'Christmas spirit' of fun, love, innocence, friendship, enthusiasm, inclusivity as well as music and storytelling on the night, I have no doubt that our lives would be all the richer for it. Throughout the church, from the youngest to the eldest on the night, the enjoyment was palpable. To quote from one of our new songs, Sounding Joy, 'Glad tidings, great joy, you are never alone' and this is what our annual event aspires to create, an atmosphere of togetherness. And while we hold tightly to the traditions and the story of Christmas, each year, efforts are made to add one or two new ingredients to our wonderful recipe of 'Christmas Spirit' on the night. This year, even more lámh was added into the fold, making the carol service accessible to all children at their own levels. We also had, for the first time, the tin whistle included into the performances and continued our School Self Evaluation process of promoting our native language, demonstrated by our rousing rendition of 'Deck the Halls' as Gaeilge. It, combined with our lámh, proved to be a wonderful addition. Congratulations to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class, on their wonderful performance of 'Oh Christmas Tree'! We have no doubt that Ms. Sinnott and her tin whistle lessons, will continue to inspire many children into finetuning their musical efforts as Wexford looks forward to Fleadh 2025! Special shout out to Junior infants for their first performance at our carol service, to Ms Roche's class for acting out the 'Story of Christmas' narrated by 6<sup>th</sup> class and to 6<sup>th</sup> class for their participation in their last ever carol service! It is nights like this that live in the memories of both staff and pupils for years to come. Big thanks to Ms. Sinnott, our musical maestro, who directs, rehearses and ensures that our Carol Service live in the memories of members of our school and parish community year on year! Her talent and creativity do not go unnoticed, and we are truly grateful for all that she brings to our school, not only at Christmas but throughout the school year. We hope that you all enjoyed the service as much as we enjoyed rehearsing and performing it. Rumour has it, that Ms. Sinnott is already visioning the new additions for 2025!

### **Enrolment for the school year 2025 2026 – Open Night Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 7pm**

New year and new enrolments for the next school year officially opened on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Our Open night will take place on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 7pm in our school. Come along to hear what our school has to offer. For further information go to our website [www.piercestownns.com](http://www.piercestownns.com) and click on policy and admissions policy. Alternatively, call the office on 0539158854.

### **Hurling 365 Piercestown NS style coming in the New Year**

Following on from the success of Hurling 365 Piercestown NS style last year, we look forward to dusting off the hurleys and helmets after the Christmas break and getting our Hurling 365 up and running. ***Our hurling 365 will involve offering hurling sessions on our own fields before school starts in the mornings. We will offer sessions for the junior end of the school and separate days for senior end of the schools. More info to follow.*** Our 365 hurling team are looking forward to getting this initiative for our school up and running again and continuing to promote GAA within our school and local community. Many thanks to Donal Howlin and St. Martin's community who continue to work in collaboration with us and ensure we are well equipped and resourced for all these initiatives.

### **Hot meals update – New menu for 2025**

As per the email prior to the Christmas break, FRESH today, are offering new menus when we return in 2025! Don't forget to **get your order in before Thursday 5pm on Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>** to ensure that your children can taste some of the new dishes! As always, if you wish to change your order, request information, add dietary requirements, or remove yourself from the list you can contact FRESH today directly on [wexford@freshtoday.ie](mailto:wexford@freshtoday.ie)

### **Cost of Living Grant – Circular 0088/2024**

The Dept has issued schools with a once off 'cost of living grant' to help schools navigate their way financially through increased day to day running costs and heating. All information is available by going to circular 0088/2024 on the DES website.

### **World Book Fair 2025 - Coming soon End of Feb/Start of March**

The much-loved book fair will return to our school at the from the 27<sup>th</sup> of February to the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. Our Book Fair usually runs over a few mornings before school and our wonderful Parents' Association support us in holding an evening event to cater for working parents. Last year, saw the wonderful Mr Billy Roche host a story telling event on our evening book fair. In the last few years, when our book fair is here, we work hard to promote it during the school day to further promote reading, by hosting a design a book cover door competition, world book day quizzes and so forth to create momentum for all things book related during this week! Unfortunately, much to our disappointment, the book writing opportunity that our school previously participated in 'We are Writers' has been discontinued by Scholastic! This would have been our year to participate, as we had been doing so biannually. Our previous editions of 'We are Writers' will now definitely go down in the annals of Piercestown NS. We hope to find something similar in the future that will nurture, the authors, poets and illustrators of the future!

### **Handwriting competition 2025**

Following on from the success of our Handwriting competition in 2024, we are back with another one for 2025! This competition not only celebrates the best handwriting but also the importance of handwriting, with a focus on improvement and each child focusing on 'their best' and the remarkable improvements that they can make throughout the competition. This exciting competition encourages students to take pride in their penmanship. Last year's overall winner, Oliver, has his photo proudly displayed in our hallway. Who will claim the title this year and join our 'hall of handwriting' fame? Many thanks to Ms. Caldicott for introducing this initiative last year and to the wonderful company Green Tech HQ who so generously sponsored the prizes. More information to come soon! This once again will focus on

### **Gaeilge**

As we continue into a New Year, let's keep the momentum of our efforts at Gaeilge going. Having wished all far and wide a 'Happy Christmas', let's extend theses good wishes into the New Year. Agus muid ag leanúint ar aghaidh isteach san Athbhliain, coinnimid móiminteam ár n-iarrachtaí i leith na Gaeilge ag dul. Tar éis 'Nollaig Shona' a ghuí ar chách, déanaimis na dea-mhéin seo a shíneadh isteach san Athbhliain.

**Guím gach rath agus séan ort san athbhliain.** *I wish you a happy and prosperous new year.*

**Athbhliain faoi mhaise duit!** *Happy New Year*

### **Big Birthday Shout Outs - January!**

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Cian in Junior infants, Saoirse and Jack B from Senior infants; Fiadh, Eva and Savannah from 1<sup>st</sup> class; Caolán, Joey, Cian and Millie from 2<sup>nd</sup> class; Holly and Grace from 3<sup>rd</sup> class; Síne, Mae and Kiefer from 4<sup>th</sup> class; Aidan and Katie S from 5<sup>th</sup> class; Harry from 6<sup>th</sup> class;. We hope you all enjoy your special day!!!



*“Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!  
Happy birthday dear Cian, Saoirse, Jack B, Fiadh, Eva, Savannah, Caolán, Joey, Cian, Millie,  
Holly, Grace, Síne, Mae, Kiefer, Aidan, Katie S., and Harry,  
Happy birthday to you.”*

### **Bi Cineáltas CPD date for 2025 Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January**

As flagged in our previous newsletters, we have been awaiting confirmation of the school closure date our Bí Cineáltas CPD day. This date was confirmed prior to the Christmas break and shared with you as Friday January 31<sup>st</sup>. On this day, school will close for all pupils at 12.30pm. Sunny Days remains open on this day to facilitate parents with childcare while the professional development is taking place. As the Bí Cineáltas, requires full community input, we look forward to sharing the learning with you following on from this day and engaging in the important conversations about the new ‘Bí Cineáltas procedures’ which work towards making our schools and communities even safer places for our children. For further information, go to <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e8f46-bi-cinealta-resources-for-primary-schools-post-primary-schools-and-parents/> where there are a wealth of resources for schools and parents.

### **Primary Maths Curriculum School Closure 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025**

As per previous newsletters, a reminder that school is closed for pupils on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April to facilitate staff attending professional development for the continued roll out of the primary curriculum framework and in particular the Primary Maths Curriculum.

### **Sacraments**

2025 will be an exciting year for 2<sup>nd</sup> class who will continue their preparation towards the sacrament of reconciliation on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm and their first Holy Communion on Sat 10<sup>th</sup> of May. This is an exciting time in the parish and school community. Friday 11<sup>th</sup> of April will see pupils from 6<sup>th</sup> class make their Sacrament of Confirmation. Many thanks to Fr. Aodhán and Mr. Lehané, Ms. Sinnott, Ms. Hearne, and Mr Murphy who continue to support the children in their preparation and journeys towards these celebrations.

### **Catholic Schools Week Sun 19<sup>th</sup> -Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025**

In supporting our school ethos, Catholic schools’ week will be supported from Sun 19<sup>th</sup> -Sat 25<sup>th</sup>. As part of the ethos of our schools, we are also supportive of other faiths and none and this will continue to be supported during this week.

### **Piercestown Parents’ Association Update – Update**

Many thanks to the wonderful Parent’ Association who added to the Christmas spirit by getting the children ready for the Toy Show and hosting their wonderful Christmas bazaar! The children were well and truly stocked up for the biggest night of the year, with all children leaving with stashes of chocolates, sweets and biscuits. Many thanks to all who worked so hard to ensure this event took place for the children. Huge congratulations to the PA who raised a brilliant €1266. Word has it, there is a new fundraiser up and coming that will get us off our couches and moving into 2025 with a pep in our step! More information to come soon!

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

Hopefully, by now you and the children are feeling rested after a busy first term. I hope that the holidays have brought with it opportunity for a break from routine of lunches, homework, early starts and allowed opportunities for quality family time, board games, movie days and nights and enjoyment of all things festive. New Year brings with it new opportunities. As you can see from our newsletter, we already have new plans in the pipeline! From 'Science blast projects' to continuing with new build developments, the future looks exciting for 2025! No doubt for 6<sup>th</sup> class it is an exciting year, where they will finish one chapter in school and begin a new chapter in secondary school. We hope that the last few months with us can create some moments that live in their memories long after they leave our doors. Some people will enter the 'New Year' with new year's resolutions and goals! Others may enter it with apprehension at saying goodbye to a past year. My hope for the new year is that the wonderful partnership that exists within our school community continues to flourish and grow. I look forward to the new learning opportunities that arise within our school and new initiatives that continue to grow and develop. My wish is for a happy, healthy 2025 for all members of our school community where all your goals, dreams and ambitions can continue to grow, and hope can continue to burn bright at times when life can be challenging. As the many new years wishes go, here's to a new year filled with hope and optimism, with the promise of a brighter future ahead.

***"There is nothing magical about the flip of a calendar, but it represents a clean break, a new hope and a blank canvas". – Jason Soroski***

### **Dates for your diaries so far this year:**

- Thursday Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> 5pm – deadline for changing FRESH today lunch menus
- School will reopen for the second term on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- Mindful Monday Jan 6<sup>th</sup> will offer us a good start to the New Year!
- Assembly will take place on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
- Open Night for Piercestown NS 2025 Jan 15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm
- Catholic schools Week celebrated from Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January
- School will close for half day Bí Cineáltas CPD for all staff on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 12.30pm
- Public holiday school closure Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February (St. Brigid's Day)
- Safer Internet Day 2025 Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February
- First Confession will take place on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025 7pm
- Midterm break School will be closed on February 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> (Thurs and Fri)
- Pancake Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025
- School closure for pupil's 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025 inclusive (this replaces the week in June closure)
- Book fair 27<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025
- School closure for CPD in Primary Maths Curriculum 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025
- Confirmation – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025
- First Communion – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025