

Piercestown Post January 2025



Welcome to the fifth edition of the Piercestown Post for the school year 2024-2025. While January always feels like a long month, the weeks flew by with a lot going on inside the walls of Piercestown N.S. Having been well rested over the festive season, the staff and pupils hit the ground running with an SNA review, Open Night, baking of scones and cookies before we were interrupted by storm Eowyn. Thankfully, the wonderful science and technology and education of the meteorologists kept all of us safe in the county and we were back up and running with just the one-day closure. We finished off with the first stage of the consultation of 'Bí Cinéalta' under our belt too and are rearing to 'spring' into the brighter days for all the fun and learning that lies ahead. If you want to catch up with us and see how we got through January, pour yourself a cuppa and enjoy the read!

Science Blast 2025!

4th class are on the countdown to their trip to Dublin, where they will once again be flying the STEM flag on behalf of Piercestown N.S. Their investigations on the question 'How to make water vanish?' are in full flight and they are using all their scientist skills in the process. Many different theories are being investigated and 4th class are busy gathering their evidence to present their findings in the RDS. We look forward to updating you all on their findings and we are sure they will enjoy their day showcasing all of their work on Monday the 3rd of March.

Quiz time!

Best of luck to Francis, Tom, Tess and Mae in the under 11 and Joe, Jack, Lily and Kiara in the under 13 team who are heading off to the Riverside Hotel in Enniscorthy next Sunday to test their general knowledge in the Credit Union schools table quiz! We look forward to hearing how they get on. Thanks to their parents for taking the time to bring them to these events!

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic school's week is celebrated in our school while ensuring the inclusivity of all children of other faiths and none is respected. Often, the Christian values are those that relate to human life and all families of other religions and none. Catholic school's week gives us time for reflection, meditation, acknowledgement and appreciation of all that is good in life, and we even bring our home economics skills to the 6th class. 3rd class combined literacy with their Catholic school's week efforts that ensured all children could participate. The children chose a special person in their life and wrote them a surprise letter and posted them to ensure that love and appreciation reached all corners of not only Wexford, but other counties in Ireland and even across the water to the United Kingdom. Well done to 3rd class. Other classes made lovely cards to celebrate 'grandparents' day' and these went home in the school bags to be enjoyed by their special recipients. 6th class were getting ready to celebrate in person 'Special Persons Day', be it a grandparent, aunt, parent, neighbour, family friend and invite them into their school environment and share some of their school life today. In preparation, Ms. Walsh and Ms. Caldicott donned their aprons and brought in their baking skills with the children making either scones or cookies. Unfortunately, storm Éowyn had other ideas and the day itself was postponed due to the school closure. We will update you on this rescheduled date soon.

Daniel competes at National Minor Competition

Swimming is to the forefront of Piercestown NS active ethos with Daniel Jordan representing us recently at the Leinster Minor Schools Gala. Not only did Daniel compete well, he smashed his own personal best! Well done, Daniel! No doubt Ms. Walsh and the staff will be keeping an eye on Daniel's swimming prowess long after he leaves Piercestown NS.

Chess

The school's chess competition has been a thrilling journey, with every child from 3rd to 6th class playing at least eight games. As we enter the final round, the tension builds, and the excitement is palpable. There are still plenty of spots open on the Ficheall teams—The Buds (top 8 from 3rd and 4th class) and The Masters (top 8 from 5th and 6th class). Along with these coveted team positions, gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded to the top players in each

class. The ultimate prize, however, is the prestigious Eamonn Barrett Chess Trophy, which will be presented to the overall winner. With only one round to go, all eyes are on the frontrunners: can Rogan, from 6th class, follow in his brother's footsteps and claim the championship? Or will 5th class's Donagh make a final push to bring the trophy home? Regardless of the outcome, a huge congratulations is due to every participant for their incredible effort and dedication. Their enthusiasm and progress over the course of the competition have been inspiring to watch. As we eagerly await the final results, one thing is certain: this has been a great display of talent and sportsmanship and what a fun way to develop our problem-solving skills!!

"Chess isn't just about winning, it's about learning, growing, and having fun along the way."

Keep an eye out in next month's newsletter for the full list of winners.

Fresh Today Hurling 365 Skills Competition

The Hurling 365 competition for 3rd and 4th class has been an exciting journey so far, though recent wet weather has caused a slight delay in completing Skill four of the competition. Skill four is a timed task where each participant must pick up six balls while running. Time is added for each missed pickup, making it both a test of speed and precision. With some participants still needing to complete this skill and one more skill remaining, the race to represent Piercestown NS at the county final in Wexford Park is still wide open. The competition has been fierce, with everyone eager to showcase their hurling/camogie skills and earn their place in the final. Next week, the participants will be introduced to Skill five, which combines elements from some of the previous skills they've practiced. This will provide another chance to demonstrate their abilities before the final selection is made. Once the in-school competition is completed, our representative for the county final will be chosen, and we will also announce our Most Improved Hurler or Camogie Player. The talent and determination on display has been fantastic, and it's clear that each child is giving their best effort. It's shaping up to be an exciting conclusion, with everyone looking forward to the final stages of the competition. Best of luck to all involved, and the winner will be announced in next month's edition of the newsletter.

Hurling 365 Piercestown NS style

Following the success of our introduction to the Hurling 365 initiative, we are excited to announce that it will be returning to our school grounds starting in the second week of February. Sessions will be held on Tuesdays for Junior Infants to 2nd class, and Wednesdays for 3rd to 6th class. This initiative is open to every child, from seasoned club players to absolute beginners, and we will ensure that everyone is catered for, no matter their skill level. More information will follow this week, but we are all looking forward to dusting off our hurls and enjoying the opportunity to improve our skills together!

Swimming lessons

Ms. Hearne's class has been attending swimming lessons on Tuesdays, and they have already completed two lessons with Sinead, their swimming instructor. The progress they've made so far has been great, with all the pupils showing great enthusiasm and improvement in their skills. They will continue with these lessons throughout February, and we're excited to see how much further they will develop in the coming weeks!

Handball

Following on from the competition held by Mick Lyng in conjunction with St. Martins Handball club our school representatives in the school Handball competition were announced in last month's newsletter. The date for the inter school competition has yet to be announced but under Mick's guidance they have been training away and are looking forward to the competition and hoping that all their hard work pays off. We will keep you updated in next month's newsletter and hopefully will have some county medal winners to celebrate!!!

Rugby season is upon us

Rugby season is upon us in more ways than one. What a great start to the Six Nations campaign for Ireland at the weekend and to keep our Gaeilge going, Ms. Lehané and 5th class performed the Haka as ghaeilge in assembly this morning! Starting on Wednesday 12th March and continuing for five weeks up until Easter, our children from 1st-6th class will have the opportunity to take part in rugby coaching by Leinster Rugby.

FAI soccer NEW**2025**

On the wish list of 6th class was to have the opportunity to take part in the FAI schools soccer tournament. And so, the wish was granted. Mr. Murphy is the lead on this event and will keep us updated in next month's newsletter. We have registered two boys' teams and two girls' teams so all of those who wish to take part can do so. The event runs as a one-day event (date to be confirmed) and if any teams make it to the next round, they get another day out! Best of luck to 6th class!

Open night 2025

Our Open Night took place on January 15th, 2025, in a very busy Junior infant classroom. All our guests received a warm 'fáilte romhat' from our wonderful cohort of 6th class pupils and a well-deserved cup of tea or coffee following a long day from our amazing Piercestown Parents' Association. The school was a hive of activity with all classes displaying either audio, video or project work that gave a glimpse into the life of pupils here in our school. Our modular was open for the first Open night and ready to showcase our newest resource. Ms. Walsh was on hand with the staff to showcase and explain, as best she could, the journey through primary school for all our pupils. But if the audience were in any doubt about the education that lies within the walls of Piercestown, the evidence of the quality lay in the 6th class speakers on the night. This year eleven wonderful pupils volunteered to script and speak in public. Ms Walsh was glad she had gone first as they would have been a hard act to follow! Huge thanks to Meabh, Joe, Izzie, Lily, Nicole, Maya, Mia, Kiara, Erin, Roan and Jack.

As a staff, we could not have been prouder of these children. Imagine at the age of twelve, volunteering to stand in front of a crowded room of adults and speak. Now that is impressive! Huge thanks to all staff who worked behind the scenes and on the night to ensure our school was showcased to the best of its ability.

Safer Internet Day (SID 2025) – online talk on cybersafety for parents available!

Safer internet day will take place on Tuesday 11th February. The internet is our greatest tool but can also be our greatest danger as our children grow up. Technology is advancing at the rate of knots and often our children will literally be ahead of the game. It is our responsibility as adults and parents to support them, protect them and help them navigate the cyber world as we would the physical world around us. It has been a wonderful journey to work in collaboration with the Piercestown Parents' Association in the establishment of their 'Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free pledge'. To marry in with Safer Internet Day, the PA will send their statistics of their campaign to all families. Cybersafety is an integral part of the new Bí Cineálta guidelines and we look forward to launching The Pledge and the Bí Cineálta guidelines once full collaboration with the school community has taken place. In the meantime, the school has booked in professional face to face talks for 3rd to 6th class to take place on February 14th. To mark the actual day itself, on Tuesday, staff will deliver lessons under the SPHE curriculum. The new primary curriculum framework identifies one of the key competencies for our children as being a 'digital learner'. To do this safely, we too must upskill ourselves in the area. www.webwise.ie is a website that offers support to staff and parents alike. For further information for parents please go to <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/> This year, we are also offering a talk for parents around internet safety. We are aware attendance at such events in the evening can be challenging so this year, we are going to pilot an 'online talk' to see how successful this is. More details will be sent to you later this week.

SNA review

Having put in a mammoth first term, it became obvious that our resources were stretched in terms of our SNA team. Under the new guidelines for the allocation and use of SNA resources and circular 0049/2024, a pathway for a review was laid out. Ms. Walsh, in collaboration with Ms. Hearne, in her new role as acting deputy, and our amazing SNA team set about following the procedures and making our case prior to Christmas. Having gotten the application submitted prior to the Christmas break, we were ready for the review date when it was issued. The review date was set for Jan 14th and spilled over into the 15th. Huge thanks to parents who assisted us with new required paperwork for this process and the SNA team who were observed and interviewed (no mean feat!). We were delighted to get the news from our local Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) that we were receiving an increase of 0.83 of a post which was a massive win for us as a school and will ensure that all of the needs of our children will continue to be met. The

recruitment process is underway, and the Board of Management are confident that it will be complete post Feb midterm break. Many thanks to Ms. Hearne, her attention to detail, insight into special education needs and determination to get things across the line made my job and that of the SNA team all the more doable.

Class of the Month December 2024

Having gathered the scores before Christmas, all eyes were on the January assembly to see who the recipients of 'Class of the Month' were. We were delighted to announce that the winners for December were Ms. Roche, Teresa and Senior infants. We saw a problem though with our reward. With hot lunches now firmly embedded in most schools, pupils were losing their appetite for our much-loved pizza party. We gave senior infants the choice of something different and they had the first ever ice-cream party which was a great success! Piercestown National School gave 'Scúp' and 'Licked' a run for their money! Assembly took place today and Congratulations to 3rd Class who are the first winners of 2025!!

Students Council

Following on from the discussion around 'Class of the month, our student's council took it upon themselves to survey the pupils. There are some interesting ideas being floated around the place. We look forward to the results. Students Council will be playing a big role in organising the pupil voice in the coming 'Bí Cineálta' consultation process. We look forward to sharing their role and journey in this process.

Hot meals Contacts

As per the email recently, there has been much conversation across social media about the hot meals. If people wish to make further enquiries or indeed pause or make changes to their orders, please contact FRESH today by email on wexford@freshtoday.ie

World Book Fair 2025 - Coming soon

The much-loved book fair will return to our school from the 27th of February to the 6th of March. Our Book Fair usually runs over a few mornings before school and our wonderful Parents' Association supports us in holding an evening event to cater for working parents. We are putting the finishing touches to dates and times at the minute and you will receive an email in the coming weeks sharing the details. No doubt classes are already planning ahead for their 'door' competition!

Handwriting Competition 2025

We are delighted to announce the launch of our annual Handwriting Competition, running until the end of February. This competition highlights the importance of clear, legible handwriting and encourages all students to take pride in their written work.

Neat handwriting is an essential skill that supports effective communication and academic success. To recognise students' efforts, we will be awarding engraved trophies to the student with the best handwriting in each class from 1st to 6th. Additionally, there will be a 'Most Improved Handwriting' award, presented to the student who has shown the greatest progress over the competition period. We encourage all students to take part by focusing on letter formation, spacing, and presentation. This is a wonderful opportunity to develop an important skill while striving for excellence. Many thanks to Ms. Caldicott for leading this worthwhile initiative.

Best of luck to all participants!

School Self Evaluation update

As you will all know, we are up and running with our 'Frásaí na seachtaine' for the new year. We are upping the ante in terms of Gaeilge neamhfhoirimiúl and new programmes are being implemented in different classes. We continue to promote our Gaeilge by interactive games and performances at assembly. As the saying goes, 'Tús maith leath na hoibre' (a good start often means half the work!) so we are hoping that our concerted efforts combined with parental

support and home will keep us moving in the right direction. We will send home the school improvement plan in the coming weeks so you can see where our journey is at, and where we hope to take it to. Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

Gaeilge

The 1st of February is a special date in the Irish calendar. For many, it is the feast day of St. Brigid, to others it marks Imbolg, one of the older Celtic days, while for others it announces the start of Spring.

Tá sé am dúinn glantachán earraigh a dhéanamh! It is time for a spring clean!

Why not use these phrases, along with our 'Frásaí na Seachtaine' to tackle the spring clean.

Glan amach do sheomra leapa. Clean out your room!

Caith amach do shean éadaí! Throw out your old clothes.

Ceannaigh boscaí agus fillteáin. Buy storage boxes and a folder.

Déan mar chlann an glanadh mar ní neart go cur le chéile!! Do the cleaning as a family as there's no strength without unity!

New student

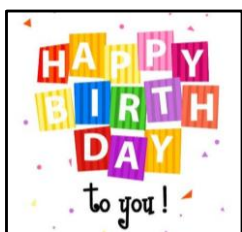
Junior Infants were so excited on the morning of the 20th of January to welcome in a new member of the class. Brax was welcomed with open arms and his books and seat were ready and waiting. His friends helped him settle in on the playground and Joe and Rogan, from 6th Class, hovered in the background to lend a supporting hand should they need to, to ensure all was well on his first day! Being a new student in an established classroom can be incredibly daunting but Brax rose to the challenge and has enjoyed his first few days with us. We are delighted to have him as part of the Piercestown Family.

Piercestown Spelling Bee 2025

In the absence of Eason's Spelling Bee competition, we have decided to keep the spirit going and run our own Spelling Bee along the same lines to tie in with the book fair and World Book Day. We will source a small trophy that can be given to the winner each year for their efforts! We look forward to updating you on this in the next newsletter.

Big Birthday Shout Outs - February!

We would like to wish the following children a big happy birthday: Brax, Ruth and Emma M. from Junior Infants. Jacob from Ms Sinnott's class, Jack P from Senior infants; Reeva, Ruan, Ben and Kate K from 1st class; Noah, Tyler and Mark from 3rd class; Lorna, Hollie and Zoe from 4th class; Chloe, Eoin D., Annie, Luca, Emily, James from 5th class; Meabh and Emily from 6th class. We hope you all enjoy your special day!!!



"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!"

Happy birthday dear, Brax, Ruth, Emma M. Jacob, Jack P, Reeva, Ruan, Ben, Kate K, Noah, Tyler, Mark, Lorna, Hollie, Zoe, Chloe, Eoin D., Annie, Luca, Emily, James, Meabh and Emily.
Happy birthday to you."

Bi Cineáltas CPD date for 2025 Friday 31st January

Friday 31st was a half day for the children but not so much for the staff. Ms Walsh assured the children that she would put the staff through their paces much to the children's delight. With Ms Lyttleton now trained in too, Ms. Walsh had someone there to ensure she was delivering the message as clearly as she could. Consultation process with the staff took place around our current antibullying procedures, strategies to address and prevent bullying and changes that are required under the new legislation. The afternoon was extremely productive, and we feel equipped to move to the consultation process for parents and pupils shortly. Many thanks for facilitating the staff to engage in their CPD especially after the previous school closure the week before. We feel that with Safer Internet Day coming up, the work of the Parents Association around the smartphone pledge and our hard work around wellbeing and safety that we are working very hard in all areas under 'Bí Cineálta'. The policies, one for adults and one student friendly version for pupils have to be completed and ratified by the Board of Management by the end of this school year ready to roll out for September 2025. For further information on Bí Cineálta, 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.

ISM team replenished

With the rejig of the in-school management team in recent months and required recruitment, it has taken a few months to replenish the team back up to our sanctioned quota of principal, deputy principal and three assistant principal posts. With Mrs. Corrigan availing of her job share, this opened an Acting Deputy position. As Ms. Hearne was successful in this process and was already on the ISM team, this opened up another acting Assistant Principal II post. Recruitment for this has finally been completed and we welcome Ms. Lyttleton to the team. We look forward to working with Ms. Lyttleton in her new role. A huge thanks must be extended to Ms. Sinnott and Mrs. Larkin who have kept the ship afloat alongside Ms. Walsh and Ms. Hearne while we were a person down. The team spirit within our school is admirable and the contribution of ALL staff needs to be commended. The in-school management team is supported by an amazing staff who contribute at many levels across our school without request. We really appreciate the wonderful effort of all the staff in our school.

Piercestown Parents' Association Update

The impending arrival of storm Éowyn was not going to deter the Piercestown PA from meeting. There was discussion and planning around upcoming events such as book fair, sacraments and proposed fundraisers for the year ahead. The collaboration between the PA and the school around the timely launch of the 'smartphone pledge' was also commendable. Huge thanks to the PA for their continued work behind the scenes and support in ensuring that our school can make the best provisions for our children.

St. Brigid's Day Crosses

In celebration of St. Brigid's Day, students across many classes took part in making St. Brigid's crosses. 6th class played a key role in helping the younger students to create their crosses using colourful pipe cleaners. In 3rd class and in Ms Hearne's, the students embraced the tradition of crafting their crosses using natural rushes, following the custom that has been passed down through generations. On Friday, the 3rd class students and those from Ms Hearne's class attended Mass with their completed crosses, which were then blessed by Fr Aodhan. They were encouraged to place their blessed crosses in a visible place in their homes, as a symbol of faith and protection. It was a wonderful way to connect with both the tradition and the spirit of St. Brigid's Day, with students learning and sharing the experience together. Ms. Walsh and Fr. Aodhán are already planning ahead for next year. Such was the enthusiasm of the parishioners when they saw the children's creations, we have decided (all going to plan) to start making crosses earlier next year, so that a basketful can be left in the Church for members of the Parish community who wish to take one. Many thanks to Fr. Aodhán as always for his enthusiasm and commitment to our school community.

A Word from the Principal

Spring is in the air, and we look forward to the 'grand stretch in the evenings' and all that term two has in store for us. Spring is a time for growth and new life and offers hope to people as we emerge from the darkness and cold of the winter months. The Board of Management continues to work hard to continue the growth of our new building project. Our student's council is continuing to grow and flourish and bring their new ideas to the table. Our 6th class pupils are in the final phase of growing in primary school and we are amazed at the growth of ALL our pupils so far. They literally are taller, wiser and happier as they grow within our wonderful school environment. We hope you have hope in your hearts and that springtime offers hope and growth for the months ahead.

"Where flowers bloom, so does hope" – Lady Bird Johson

Dates for your diaries so far this year:

- Tranquil Tuesday February 4th, 2025
- Board of Management meeting Tues Feb 4th, 2025, 6.30pm
- Safer Internet Day 2025 Tuesday 11th February
- First Confession will take place on Thursday 13th February 2025 7pm

- Safer Internet Day face to face talk for 3rd to 6th class children Feb 14th
- Safer Internet Day online talk for parents - date TBC this week
- Midterm break School will be closed on February 20th and 21st (Thurs and Fri)
- Monday 3rd March - 4th Class attend RDS Science Blast
- Pancake Tuesday 4th March 2025
- Book fair 27th February to 6th March 2025
- Book fair night event TBC soon
- School closure for pupil's 17th – 21st March 2025 inclusive (this replaces the week in June closure)
- School closure for CPD in Primary Maths Curriculum 3rd April 2025
- 6th Class FAI soccer event date TBC
- Confirmation – Friday 11th April 2025
- First Communion – Saturday 10th May 2025