

Whitechurch N.S.



Newsletter Nov/Dec 2020



30 Years Ago!

Above is a picture of our school exactly 30 years ago! Notice that there are just 4 classrooms and the hall. The extension that houses JI, 6th Class and the staffroom was added on to the left side of the building in 2007, while the extension that houses 3rd Class, 1st Class, the principal's office, 2 of our Support Teacher rooms, the reception area and secretary's office was added on to the right side of the building in 2016. Can you spot any other differences? Pupils and past pupil parents take a close look and see what you can spot- Ms. Richards will be asking about this at our next assembly!

Did you know that Whitechurch NS was only one of a small handful of schools to be given approval to be built in the mid 80's- it was in the thick of a very big recession so much of the cost of the building of the school had to be funded by the parents and parish. The school was housed in the Parish hall and old stables building before our lovely new school was built across the road from the church. The site was made up of a number of different parcels of land pieced together.

As we head towards the 200 year anniversary of the founding of Whitechurch NS (1823), we will be looking back and gathering lots more of our local history. If you are a past pupil or past parent and have some memories or photographs to share, please get in touch- we would love to hear about it!

We are hoping to compile a book about the history of the school over its 200 years and we want to gather as much information and as many photographs as possible.

Whitechurch Mother's Union Christmas Hampers Collection

Whitechurch Mothers' Union make up hampers every Christmas to be distributed to the less well off in our community and we are once again asking for your help! Donations of non-perishable foods such as tinned foods, cereals, soup, tea, coffee, biscuits, sweets etc. would be most welcome! Thank you for your generosity with this project last year, it was much appreciated. A box will be left in the main school entrance hallway where you can put you donations. Many thanks to all of you for your support with this project.

(Whitechurch Parish Mother's Union)

The church will be open on Saturday 5th December 12 noon to 2.00 p.m., and Sunday 6th December 11.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m., when parish contributions can be left in to the church. Contributions could kindly be made at the School from Tuesday 1st to Friday 4th December. There will also be a box in the main foyer entrance where parents and pupils can drop in donations.

Peter McVerry Trust Coat Appeal

Alongside the MU Hamper Box, we'll also be collecting donations of warm coats to be given to the homeless care of Elizabeth Pena who works for the Peter McVerry Trust.

Free online counselling service

There is a government funded online counselling service for people experiencing poor mental health during this pandemic. This is free to all who need it and can be accessed using www.mymind.ie (Covid-19 Project). Individuals can access HSE accredited counselling and can choose a counsellor that meets their needs (bereavement, addiction, loneliness, depression etc). www.mymind.ie also have counselling services available outside of the Covid-19 Project, which while not free of charge, may be of benefit to someone known to you.

PTA Clothing collection

Thank you to everyone who dropped in bags of clothes recently. The clothing collection raised €172. We will be holding another collection in January so anyone who is clearing out over Christmas might keep their bags for us and bring them into school in the new year!

Message from Team Hope

This year our school is supporting Team Hope's Christmas Shoebox Appeal. The Christmas Shoebox Appeal is an annual campaign where thousands of individuals in Ireland donate shoeboxes filled with gifts to be given to children affected by poverty in Africa or Eastern Europe. It is an opportunity to share a little joy and excitement with children who live in circumstances where these can sometimes be in short supply. You can read their stories at www.Teamhope.ie. This year due to the effects of Covid-19 restrictions, the Christmas

Shoebox Appeal has gone online. Every €20 donated will allow Team hope's partners in Africa or Eastern Europe to purchase items for shoeboxes locally, which will then be packaged and delivered directly into the hands of children.

Thank you for supporting this appeal.

Book Fair

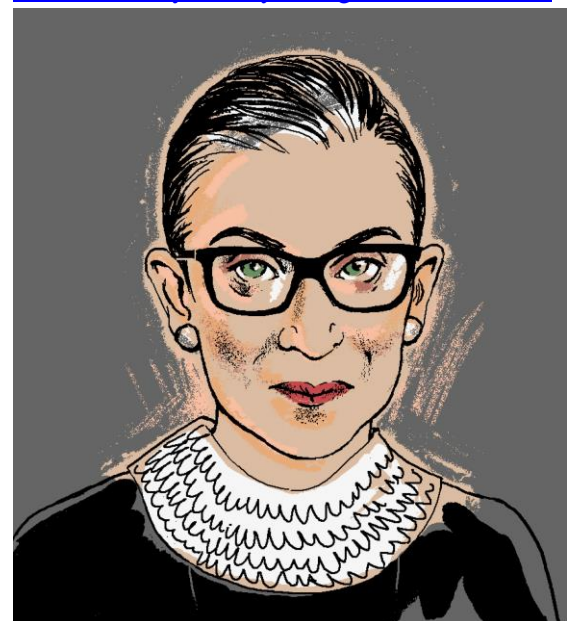
Many thanks to all who supported our Annual Book Fair. A huge thank you to Ms. Farrar who oversaw the admin and ordering for the Book Fair. The pupils bought €1682.16 worth of books. The school will now be able to purchase books for each class library to the value of 60% of total money raised (€1009.30 worth of books for the school).

Hockey Bags and Footwear

Please do not send pupils into school with studded or bladed shoes. We are finding that they are causing damage to our special artificial grass surfaces and basketball court. If you need them for Hockey, put them in your bag and change into them before Hockey. No big hockey stick bags at school please- we don't have the room to safely store them!

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

6th Class have been learning about the late US Supreme Court Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. [Click this link to read a fantastic piece about her life, written by Rosalyn Waghorn in 6th Class.](#)



Pick Up Times- Easing the congestion

We've been finding that the collection times at 2pm/1.45 seem to be getting a bit more congested lately, making it difficult to socially distance. We'd like to remind everyone about the following procedures for pick up times. Please pass these on to any other adults who collect your child such as minders, afterschool or grandparents.

✓ Queue up for collecting on the path in the laneway nearest the basketball court. Keep the appropriate social distance and wear a mask.

✓ Don't park in the laneway- this is reserved for afterschool minibuses only.

✓ Encourage children to walk a bit further down the road to meet you if you think they are responsible enough to do this. Let their class teacher know if you will be doing this.

✓ Only 1 parent should enter the gate to collect at a time. Do not enter the school grounds if your child is not lined up outside and ready to go. We do not want parents waiting around inside the school grounds as this makes it hard to socially distance. Let the next parent in instead and wait until you see your child's line is out before you enter the school grounds.

✓ Do not bring dogs into school grounds. If you are walking with your dog, you can just signal to your child from outside the gate, walk along the outside of the gate and then meet your child as they exit the gate furthest away from the basketball court.

✓ Move on quickly and do not stay around for chats with other families.

✓ Walk across the pedestrian crossing and leave enough room from the family ahead of you- too many people crowding through the gates at once does not allow for social distancing and is not safe at present.

We are really hoping that everyone can get back on track with pick up times so that we don't have to go to staggered collection times for different classes which would not be ideal. We really appreciate your support with this and again, we would remind you all to let others who collect your child know about our procedures also.

Thank you for your cooperation.

DSPCA Workshop

All classes recently had a virtual workshop with the DSPCA in their classrooms.

At 11.30am last Tuesday we had a Zoom call with the D.S.P.C.A. The person who talked with us was called Anne. She taught us about how to properly take care of our pets such as our Horses, cats and dogs. She taught us that if birds are on the ground it doesn't mean they are hurt, they are usually just learning to fly. And if we leave bottles or cans on the ground little squirrels or cats can get stuck in them. Or foxes can hurt their paws by stepping on them. So we have to put our rubbish in the right bins. We also learned that some people mistreat their pets by breeding them and putting their babies on the internet and that it is illegal and the conditions for the animals are terrible. She also told us about her job as the Head of Education in the D.S.P.C.A and how she works with the younger pets in the D.S.P.C.A. At the end of the session, we got to ask her some of our questions.

By Jasper Tuthill (6th Class)



Ann Hogan from the DSPCA spoke to all the classes about the work that they do and how to care for your pets. Here she is chatting with Senior Infants.

Care home Letters

Some of our classes will be taking part in An Post's free letters to care homes initiative. If you know of a care home that might like to receive pictures or letters from our pupils, please get in touch with the class teacher to let them know.

Teaching Practice

We look forward to welcoming Amy Buttimer and Jennifer Hade next term as they undertake their teaching practice with us as part of their BEd. degree in the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU. Amy will teach in 1st Class in January/February for 3 weeks and then in 6th

Class in March for 3 weeks. Jennifer will teach in 3rd Class in March for 3 weeks. All student teachers teach under the direction and supervision of the class teacher and the work they complete with the pupils is in line with the school's curriculum plans. For the duration of Teaching Practice, the class teacher still maintains overall responsibility for their pupils.

Parent Teacher Meetings

This year, our PT meetings will be held between 7th and 16th December with each class being allocated a specific day (see below). Meetings this year will be held remotely as per guidance from the DES. We will be holding phone meetings for our annual PT meetings. We hope that this will ensure there are no wifi connectivity issues and that parents with work commitments will not need to take time off work to attend. There are circumstance where a video meeting can be arranged if absolutely necessary.

Each class teacher will schedule a brief meeting with you to give you an outline of your child's progress so far this year. Meetings will be scheduled via Aladdin as they were last year.

10 minute slots will be available for you to choose during the day. As meeting time is brief and all parents will be subject to the timetable, we would ask that you stick to your time.

Before each meeting, class teachers will send you a form to complete which will give you the opportunity to let us know in advance your concerns or questions you would like addressed at the meeting. We really appreciate your input prior to the meeting as it ensures that you get the most out of the time speaking with the class teacher.

The dates for the meetings are as follows:

Monday 7th: 6th Class

Tuesday 8th: 5th Class

Wednesday 9th: 4th Class

Thursday 10th: 3rd Class

Friday 11th: 2nd Class

Monday 14th: 1st Class

Tuesday 15th: Senior Infants

Wednesday 16th: Junior Infants

Staff News

We are delighted to welcome our new classroom assistant Ms. Shadi Ahmadgholou to the school. Ms. Ahmadgholou is with us for the year under the Tús Employment Scheme and will be working in Junior Infants. Ms. Ahmadgholou is already proving to be a huge

hit in Junior Infants and Ms. Deacon is delighted to have such wonderful assistance with the pupils!



Some of our lovely new Irish reading books!

Gaeilge

Well done to all pupils for continuing to make great progress with Gaeilge in school! Lots of pupils are greeting us using Irish in the mornings and it is lovely to hear so many of them using Irish informally during the school day. We encourage this and we are delighted when a pupil speaks to us in Irish.

We recently were able to buy the "Sona ag Léamh" books which are a graded series of story books in Irish. They are suitable for pupils from 2nd Class up to 6th Class. We have bought 6 copies of each book so they can be used for small group work in Irish in the classrooms. A new set of fiction books in the Irish language has also been bought for the pupils in 1st Class.

We were also able to buy books in the Irish language for the teachers to read to their classes. Some of these are picture books and some of them are translations of stories the pupils will already be very familiar with. We have old favourites like "Cinnín oir agus na Trí Bhéar" (Goldilocks and the Three Bears) and "Tá Dhá Chluasa Chapaill ar Labhraí

Loinseach” (The King with Horses Ears) and “Ulchabháin Óga” (The Owl Babies).

The Frásaí na Seachtainne (*phrases of the week*) are announced in Assembly on Fridays and we encourage all the pupils to use these phrases throughout the week. For November and December the Frásaí na Seachtaine are as follows:

Friday 6th November: Junior Classes- Rinne mé dearmad. (*I forgot*) Senior Classes- Rinne mé dearmad ar m’obair bhaile a mhúinteoir. - (*Teacher, I forgot my homework.*)

Friday 13th November: All classes Breithlá shona duit. (*Happy Birthday*)

Friday 20th November: Junior Classes-An bhfuil cead agam dul amach?

(*Can I have permission to go out?*)

Senior Classes-An bhfuil cead agam dul amach más é do thoil é? (*Can I have permission to go out please?*)

Friday 27th November: Junior Classes- Tá peann luaidhe uaim. (*I need a pencil.*)

Senior Classes - Tá _____ ag teastail uaim. (*I need a pencil.*)

Friday 4th December: Junior Classes-Tá mé tinn. (*I’m sick.*)

Senior Classes - A mhúinteoir tá pian i mo bholg agam. (*Teacher, I have a pain in my tummy.*)

Friday 11th December: Junior Classes-Tá áthas orm. (*I’m excited.*)

Senior Classes - Tá áthas an domhain orm. (*I’m really excited.*)

Friday 18th December: Junior Classes - Nollaig Shona Duit. (Happy Christmas (when talking to one person)

Senior Classes: Nollaig Shona Dhaoibh. Happy Christmas (when addressing a group).

Beannachtaí na Nollag oraibh go léir!
Ms. MacLachlan, Gaeilge Coordinator

Garda Vetting Forms

Many thanks to all the new Junior Infant parents who have completed and returned their Garda Vetting Forms. If you have not already done this, we would greatly encourage you to do so as we rely heavily on the support of parents for many of our activities and we look forward to the day when we can have our parents back on site! For the safety and protection of all our pupils, we cannot allow any parent to volunteer to help out in the school in any capacity unless they have been Garda Vetted. If you have lost

your form and need a new one, please contact the office.

Traffic Safety

We have had a report of a near miss recently where a large jeep nearly knocked over two children on the path on Whitechurch Road. The driver was wearing earbuds and was doing a 3 point turn in amongst the parked cars and moving traffic. While doing this they bumped up onto the pavement in reverse narrowly missing two children. Please use the roundabouts at either end of Whitechurch Road to turn and drive carefully and safely around the school especially.



Pupil Contributions

Many thanks to those who have already paid their pupil contributions. If you have not yet paid, please remember there are three payment options i.e. pay in full, 2 bi-annual payments or by monthly standing order. Your support greatly benefits the successful running of the school and we rely heavily on the voluntary contribution to fund the running costs of the school as well as for equipment, supplies and various activities, trips and visitors/special workshops. Unlike other schools, we do not ask for lots of small amounts during the year to fund workshops, coaching and other activities- the cost of these are included in your voluntary contribution. A payment preference form and a direct debit form was issued earlier in the year but if you have mislaid this, Laoighse in the office will be more than happy to give you a new one.

The capitation grant that the Department gives schools to fund their running costs has still not been reinstated fully since cuts made during the recession. This grant was never enough to cover running costs of a school and the rising costs of

insurance and utility bills have been nowhere near met by the Department's funding. The school does not receive the first half of this grant until January so our first term is funded solely through your voluntary contributions and PTA fundraising and this year it is tighter than ever due to the increased costs Covid has necessitated and the loss of major fundraising events from last year such as the May Fete and Sponsored Walk.

Charity Dress Up Day

On the last day of school before the Midterm break, we held a dress up day to raise money for Crumlin Children's Hospital. Thank you to all the pupils who participated and to Gail Garry for organising things with Crumlin Hospital. A total of €570.76 was raised. There were some really inventive and creative costumes to be seen! Well done to all pupils and staff!

Lost Property

Please ensure that all pupil belongings are named including clothing. If your child comes home with something that does not belong to them, please send it back into school. Please note that every half term, any remaining items in the lost property will be donated to charity. Because of current restrictions, it is much harder to get lost property around to all classes so it is more important than ever to put names on clothing.

Christmas Performances

Each class will be recording a Christmas performance for parents via Seesaw. We hope that parents will enjoy watching these even though we can't do our usual Carol Service in person. We'll also be holding a special whole school Christmas Carol Service assembly via Google Meet on the classroom screens. We can't broadcast a live streamed service as not all pupils have parental permission for this, although we think you'll enjoy the class performances on Seesaw just as much!

PTA Christmas Fun Day- 21st December

We've been thinking hard about how we can try to do our usual Christmas events with the current restrictions. The PTA have decided to hold a Christmas Fun Day for all pupils in aid of PTA fundraising for new pupil iPads. All the usual separate small amounts normally collected at this time of year for raffle tickets, Christmas jumpers etc. will be combined into a

suggested minimum donation of €5 per child. For this donation, the PTA will be able to purchase a small gift for each child from Santa Claus (books for junior end and edible gifts for senior end), 3 selection boxes per class for a raffle- each child will get a ticket with their donation, a special remote video Santa Claus visit. All pupils will get to wear their Christmas jumper to school, have no homework, have a Christmas movie and craft activity. Any money left after costs, will go towards PTA fundraising for iPads to replace the 10 year old iPads currently in use by the pupils. Many thanks to the PTA for making it possible to have Santa visit our school again this year!

Early Christmas Closure?

Many parents have been asking if we are closing early this term to allow for children isolating before visiting older/ vulnerable family members over Christmas. We must follow direction from the DES on our Christmas closing date and as it stands, term will still end on Tuesday 22nd December. We understand concerns that some families have for their vulnerable family members and that flexibility this year is key, so any family that feels it necessary to take their child out early this term should just let the class teacher know in advance and we will understand.

Our staff are happy to start back earlier after Christmas if the DES do announce that schools will close earlier this year. We will let you know if we hear anything about changed dates from the DES. We will of course still hold our PTA Christmas Fund Day a bit earlier if we need to!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year from the staff and pupils in Whitechurch National School!



Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 24th November: Junior Infant Vision and hearing Screening

Friday 7th December – Wednesday 16th December: Parent Teacher Meetings

Monday 21st December: PTA Christmas Fun Day

Tuesday 22nd December: School closes at **11.30 a.m.** for Christmas holidays

Wednesday 6th January: School opens at 8.10 a.m. for the second term

Friday 15th January: PTA Clothing Collection



WHITECHURCH PARISH NOTICE

Re: **APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHRISTMAS HAMPERS.**

Normally, at this time of year, our **Mothers' Union** appeals for contributions to our **Christmas Hampers**, which are then distributed through local agencies. In previous years, these contributions were always very kindly given in two ways –

1. By parishioners after Sunday services, and
2. Through the National School.

This year, however, due to the current restrictions on Sunday services, there will instead be two “**Drive By**” days, when parishioners can at two different times leave in Hamper contributions, **in the church**. These two dates and times are: -

1. **Saturday 5 December**, 12 noon – 2.00 p.m.
2. **Sunday 6 December**, 11.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

In relation to **the School**, Ms. Richards has kindly agreed that parental Hamper contributions can again be left in at the School, from **Tuesday, 1 December to Friday, 4 December**.

When all contributions have been received, our Mothers' Union branch members will obviously then assemble all the Hampers, for distribution.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you most kindly for all your great generosity over the years, which has enabled Christmas Hampers to bring much joy and a real sense of being cared for in to the lives of other people.

With every blessing to all,
Horace McKinley.

Rwanda Mission Link

Good progress is continuing however with our major current project, which is the construction of a badly needed local health centre in a town called Nyamagama. We release funds in stages as money arrives with us, and so in the springtime we were able to finance erection of the roof, and just recently a further 4000 euro transfer enabled installation of the doors and windows. Much remains to be done however, with electrical, plumbing, plastering, flooring etc etc still to be financed. We need to get this done as soon as possible, lives can be saved by opening this centre as soon as possible.

Our fund raising drive is going well, and we have sent c 11,000 to Rwanda this year to date. Recently, our mission link tins have been returned to us, heavy with coins carefully gathered by individual households. And now is time for our annual push to sell Christmas greeting cards and gift cards.

Our cards are hand made in Rwanda using banana leaf, and sell in packs of 10 for 6 euro. But we sell Gift Cards ranging from Chickens / Rabbits for 5 euro right up to cows for 50 euro.

Please contact the Parish Office to purchase.

office@whitechurchparish.com

01 4934972

