

Whitechurch National School

Newsletter June 2022

8th Green Flag Awarded to WNS!

Well done to the Green School Committee led by Ms. McCobb and Ms. Durnin on the awarding of our 8th Green Flag. We had all been working on the theme of Marine/ Water awareness and conservation for the last two years and are delighted to achieve an 8th flag for our school! On the 25th of May, the Green School Committee attended a virtual ceremony with other schools who have been awarded flag. We look forward to raising the flag at school on Thursday 9th June!



Bottletop Mural

Thank you to all of the families and staff members who have been collecting bottletops all year! We finally completed our mural which contains roughly 14,500 bottletops and measures 41ft x 4ft. It has now been mounted at the corner of the playground and really brightens up our yard! All pupils were involved in putting it

together by designing, painting, arranging, sticking and even helping Ms. Richards do some drilling! Thank you to all of the staff members and parents who helped to screw on the bottle tops and also to Ms. Richards' father, Les Richards, who cut the wood to size and mounted the mural on the wall.

The design is in 3 parts representing our local area and the linkage to the sea going from the right with our nearby mountains, the Parish church, an inclusive and happy rainbow connecting to our school, the river around the school leading to the sea with a warm and caring sun and a lighthouse watching out and showing the way (as well as being the name of one of our favourite assembly songs- My Lighthouse!).

Mural Design Competition

Well done to everyone who entered! All of the ideas from the winning entries below were incorporated into the final design for the mural.

The winners were:

Lucy Coffey 3rd Class

Lucy Conn, Ross Williams, Alex Delahunty, Louis Bargas 2nd Class

Eloise Prendergast, Anna Syme 1st Class

Runners up:

Lexi Mc Call 3rd Class, Kaya Salman 4th Class, Eleanor Barrett 1st Class

Below are some of the parents who very kindly helped to screw the bottle tops in place. A huge thank you to Heather Fenton, Niall Hennigan, Paddy Gibbons, Tanja Girdham, Lindsay Delahunty, Rachel Clarke, Rosemary Lyster, Eve Prendergast, Ben Blackwell, Helen Twomey.





Decorating: Tracy Stewart-Munnelly, James Stewart-Munnelly, Summer Killingsworth
 Pizza: Mark Magennis
 Popcorn machine: Sandra Young
 Serving food: Nichola Kinch and Sandra Young
 Photo backdrop: Rachel Faulkner and Carla Keegan
 Cupcakes: Mel Steele and John Corcoran
 Donuts: Vanessa Coughlin
 Clean up: Rachel Massey, Mel Steele, Niamh Murphy, John Corcoran

Sport's Day

Sport's Day was due to take place last week but had to be postponed due to bad weather. Our Back Up Sport's Day is Friday 10th June (weather dependent). It will take place at the same time as previously planned- 10.30-1.00 in Marlay Park on the Astro Soccer Pitch. Please see email note sent for further details.



Write-a-Book Competition

Well done to all the pupils who entered the Write-a-Book competition.
 The following pupils won merits and runner up awards:
 Senior Infants whole class won an award for their class book written 'as Gaeilge'
 3rd Class – Merit award winner – Olivia Heaney
 Runners up – Katie Chadwick, Amy Harrison & Tymeck O'Shaughnessy
 4th Class – Merit award winner – Archie Moffett
 Runners up – Amelie Magennis, Alex O'Herlihy & Grace Penar-Turner
 5th Class – Merit award winner-Rory Webb
 Runners up – Josh Kelly, Ivor Guinness & Isla Costello

Super Stan Pantomime Premiere

5th and 6th Class were treated like movie starts at the recent premiere of the pantomime film on Thursday 26th May. Thank you to the following parents for all of their help making it such a special night:
 Organising, decorations and photography: Summer Killingsworth



Thank you!

The pantomime film turned out amazingly thanks to the huge amount of time and expertise given by parent, Jonny Somerville. It was so professionally done and has helped to make the experience so special for our pupils and for families watching! Thank you so much Jonny!

MOLI Workshop

The Museum of Literature Ireland (MOLI) Zoom workshop that 6th Class were a part of was very enjoyable. The man who ran it was very enthusiastic about MOLI. The workshop was very interesting and it was probably one of the

best workshops we've done all year. We had paper and pencils and were given writing and drawing tasks to complete about characters and events. At the end we were told that this is how authors begin writing books! Everyone was involved and we were allowed to express ourselves and be creative. The PowerPoint they showed us was very well put together and we even got to see a TikTok tour of the Museum! Overall the workshop was fantastic and we appreciate all of the time and effort put into it.
Luke Gamble (6th Class)

Creative Schools

Our school's Creative Associate, Gwen Williams, is guiding us through the two year process of becoming a Creative School. This is an initiative we applied for and were fortunately selected to take part. She has visited all of the classes now and has also been guiding the student council in bringing the student voice to the table.

It is a two year process with this year focussed on understanding the process and developing a plan and next year sees the plan put into action. We're looking forward to it and to seeing what the focus is! Below is a picture of the Student Council meeting to work on the project.



Creative Schools Visit

Recently in 6th Class, Gwen Williams from The Creative Schools Programme came and did

some activities with us. It was so much fun. We did some teamwork activities like building the tallest tower out of spaghetti and marshmallows! It was a lot harder than we thought.

We also wrote down the creative activities that we do as a school. She told us that she was going to make our school even more creative, more active and fun. We then had to all write what creative activities we would like to see in our school and comment on each other's ideas. We came up with lots of ideas, such as creative after-school clubs, a student-run newspaper, creative homework, creating a podcast or tv series, themed-days, and even a wall outside 6th Class to sign our names when we leave! I wonder what ideas will be selected?!

by Erin Anthoni (6th Class)



Absences over 20 days

With all of the disruption this year due to Covid including isolation times, staying off schools with possible symptoms, being ill with Covid, family members with Covid, and even important visits to relatives abroad, we have a very high number of pupils who will have missed over 20 days. Schools are always required to report these absences to the TESS section of Tusla but we are given the option of saying if we are concerned or not. Obviously with valid reasons for absences, we are not concerned and therefore the absences will be noted on the system but no follow up actions will take place. We will send you a letter/email about this if it applies to you as we are always required to do. There is no reason for any concern about this as all schools are in the same situation this year and staying off school was the right thing to do if relating to Covid!

If you have not entered all absence reasons on Aladdin, please do so ASAP otherwise they will be noted as 'unexplained' on the TESS/ Tusla

system. You can check your child's absence reasons already entered by you on the Aladdin Parent app or web login. If you have any issues with this, please contact the school office.

6th Class Graduation and BBQ

We wish all of our current 6th Class well as they finish with us at the end of this month to move on to secondary schools next term! We will hold our annual 6th Class Graduation Ceremony and BBQ on Friday 17th June. The Graduation Ceremony is for families of 6th Class pupils and will start at 12.30 p.m. in the school hall. The BBQ will take place at 7pm. The PTA kindly sponsor this event with the 6th Class parents organising and it is always a lovely evening for the pupils and their families. Thank you in advance to school staff who will attend to supervise the pupils so the parents can relax and enjoy the night!

New Rector for Whitechurch Parish

We look forward to welcoming Rev. David Bowles to Whitechurch next term once he has taken up his position as rector of Whitechurch Parish. Please click [here](#) for a link to an article about David's appointment.

Active Schools

We are looking forward to our annual **Active Fortnight** where there will be a selection of sports and other activities for the pupils each day. Some of these additional activities are funded through your pupil financial contributions. The list of activities is as follows:

Tuesday 7th June: Science Workshops with Eve Prendergast

Wednesday 8th June: 3rd-5th in Clara Lara, Leinster Rugby workshops for all other classes, Playball

Thursday 9th June: Open Morning, Green Flag Raising

Friday 10th June: Back Up Sport's Day

Monday 13th June: Active Stations for Senior Classes, Infant tour to Glenroe Farm

Tuesday 14th June: Mini Fair

Wednesday 15th June: Marlay Park Day- 1st-6th Class, Infants stay at school for a Fun Day

Thursday 16th June: Teachers vs. Students Challenge, Random Act of Kindness Day

Friday 17th June: 6th Graduation and Throw the Beanbag Around the World Challenge

Active Homework is also back by popular demand and we would encourage everyone to

make the most of the extra time available not completing written work to get outside and exercise!

Active Schools

Recently, we have been staying very active with activities such as the sponsored walk, gymnastics, orienteering, cricket and playball. This is to name just a few of the fun activities that we have been getting up too.

Gymnastics

We have started gymnastics recently with an external gymnastics coach. This takes place every Tuesday for all classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Every pupil has their own mat and has plenty of space. We have been learning to make sure that our chin is always tucked in, and after only two lessons, we are nearly able to do a bridge!

Orienteering in Marlay Park

Before the Easter Break, 5th & 6th Class took part in an orienteering competition in Marlay Park, which was organised by Leinster Schools Orienteering. This was a great activity where we were paired up with our friends, and had to use a map to locate different checkpoints in Marlay Park in just 45 minutes! In this 5th Class, the best placed girls in Whitechurch were Leah, Isla & Ciara who came 5th, and the best placed boys were Milo and Eoin who came 9th. From 6th Class, Martha and Alice were the highest place girls who finished an overall 8th position, while Percy and Luke finished the highest out of the Whitechurch boys with a final position of 9th place.

Playball

Playball has resumed again after the Easter break and it is nice to get some exercise in on a Wednesday!

Active Fortnight

The much anticipated Active Fortnight will take place this year from the 3rd - 17th of June. There will be many fun activities to look forward to including the famous 'Teachers vs Students Challenge', Sports Day, and Ultimate Frisbee. That's all the latest news and updates from the Active Schools Committee.

By Kirtsy Graham, Winnie Comerford-Cawley & Aoibhinn Keogh (5th Class)

Hockey

A huge thank you to the Hockey Committee (Neal Megarity, Rebekah Byrne, Gail Garry, Jill Moffett, Claire Barry and Janet Gamble) for all their work this year. Please let the Hockey Committee or the school office know if you would be willing to help out next year. Remember, extra-curricular PTA Hockey cannot run without volunteers so please consider getting involved in whatever way you can!

Ultimate Frisbee

Our pupils all enjoyed a workshop called Ultimate Frisbee on 2nd June. It proved very popular and was a great way to get active! The workshop was funded through your Pupil Financial Contributions.

School Pupils Mini-Fair- 14th June

If you are planning a clear-out of any surplus toys, children's games or children's books, please keep us in mind. We plan to hold our annual School Mini-Fair for pupils on Tuesday 14th June and would welcome donations from everyone. These can be left in the classrooms from Monday 13th June. For those of you that are new to the school, the Mini Fair is a small event for pupils that takes place for an hour during school that is run by the pupils for the pupils! (with a little help from staff and parents of course!) It usually takes place in January each year however, this year we had to postpone it due to Covid. But because it is a much loved event, we wanted to hold it for our pupils this term when we were able to do so safely! Please see the previous email sent out for further info.

Student Council-Random Act of Kindness Day

On Thursday 16th June, the Student Council are running a Random Act of Kindness Day in memory of parent, Jason Miller. The pupils wanted to do something in his memory and in support of Tessa May and Leon. We are suggesting that a small donation brought in that day in aid of Purple House Cancer Support. This is a great charity that provides support to families affected by Cancer and was nominated by the Stewart Miller Family. All classes will be making Random Act of Kindness notebooks or displays and pupils will be encouraged to come to school dressed in a way that makes people smile- that could be a funny outfit, a crazy hair do, odd socks- the

funnier and happier the better! The Student Council will have a special treat for all pupils during the day. Well done to the Student Council for their initiative and kindness!

Cricket

Over the last few months, we have had Seamus from Cricket Leinster who has been coming in to teach us cricket! We began by learning the basics of cricket like bowling and



catching. Then we moved on to batting with fielders and bowling. This was a lot of fun trying to hit the stumps!

We were sometimes put into groups of 6, where one person would be the bowler, one would be the batter and another the wicket keeper. It was great fun doing cricket this term and thankfully there were no smashed windows! Thank you to Cricket Leinster and to Seamus for doing this with us.

Eli Clarke & Alex O'Sullivan (5th Class)



Extra Curricular School Swimming

As we come to the end of School Swimming for the Summer term, on behalf of the P.T.A. we would like to thank Gail Garry who has organised school swimming this year. Please

remember that if your child no longer wishes to continue with swimming lessons in September you must let the PTA know via the school office before the end of this school term. This is to ensure that a shortfall does not arise in relation to swimming costs. If you have a child who wishes to start swimming lessons, please give his/her name to Laoighse in the office as soon as possible so that their name can be added to the waiting list.

Orienteering,

On the 6th April, 5th and 6th Class went Orienteering. To start they gave us scanners that went on our fingers to scan in boxes around Marlay Park, they also gave us a map which marked where the boxes are. Everyone started to plan and we waited for them to bring the starting box. When we scanned our devices and then ran! To get points you had to go to the marked places on the map and put the scanner in the box until it beeped. We had to go all around Marlay Park. The team that scanned the most boxes in the shortest time won. Many other schools took part, too, and we didn't win but we placed in the top 10. It was an incredibly fun school trip!
Percy Parkins (6th Class)



Book Rental Scheme

The booklists for next year are now up on our website. Those who will be in 3rd-6th Class next year will participate in our Book Rental Scheme. The Book Rental fee should be paid by 10th June. Please pay this when you receive an ePayment request from Aladdin. By paying the Book Rental fee, you are agreeing to the conditions of

the Book Rental Scheme. Thank you to Ms. Wilson who coordinates the Book Rental Scheme. Although the Book Rental Scheme involves a lot of extra coordinating and work, we are delighted to run it as it certainly saves families huge amounts of money each year.

Thursday 9th June- Open Morning and Green Flag Raising

We will be holding our Open Morning on Thursday 9th June from 8.10 a.m. – 8.45 a.m. The boys and girls are invited to bring along their mum / dad / brother / sister / parents / guardians / grandparents to visit their classroom, take a look at some of their work and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee in the school hall. A selection of artwork will be on display in the hall also. All pupils must remain in their classrooms- the tea and coffee in the hall is just for adults!

We will all go outside at 8.45am to raise our newest Green Flag which has been awarded to the school recently. We hope to see you all there!



A beautiful picture of a lion made by Emma Jane Murphy in 3rd Class!

Italian lessons

As part of the Post Primary Languages Ireland Programme Mr. Salvo Cacciato (a parent in the school) gave Italian lessons to 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th classes. All of the pupils really enjoyed it and we are so grateful to Salvo for giving up so much time to enthuse our pupils about Italian and other languages! Salvo is a post primary teacher on secondment to the PPLI so big congratulation to Salvo on the development of an extremely successful initiative!

At the start of February, we started to do Italian lessons. Our teacher Salvo would knock quietly

and then he would say "Ciao, buongiorno!" very loudly. At the start of doing Italian lessons, Salvo gave us Language Passports. First, we had to write the languages we spoke in the boxes and pick a colour for them, then we had to colour a person in with the languages we spoke. After, we learned the basis of Italian like how to say hi, bye etc. We also learned the feelings like happy, sleepy, exited and more. If we answered the question right we would get a prize which would be a pen or a badge or a keyring. Also we had to say, my name is _____. We played a game as well where Salvo would take an Italian word off the whiteboard and we would have to guess what was that he took away. Then we had to guess the top Italian names from the top twenty girls or boy's names and we got stickers to write our Italian names. Also every week he would bring Giorgio the ginger teddy cat who had a blue Italian jersey on, and one week he forget Giorgio! On the last lesson we made traditional Italian food out of materials around the classroom and there was a photographer to take photos of us. After he took a video of us explaining our amazing foods. We made pizza, pasta, and gelato. A few weeks later we saw a picture of Erin and Sophie during Italian lessons in a magazine!

Nia Jessup (6th Class)



Ciao! Over the last number of weeks, we have been very lucky to have one of the Whitechurch parents, Salvo, coming into our school to teach the senior classes Italian.

At the beginning, we each got a little activity book and a fold-up vocabulary sheet. Each week, Salvo would teach us a new series of words such as food, colours, numbers etc.

Then he would test us on what we learned. If we participated and got the answer correct, we would be given a prize from the 'Say Yes to Languages' prize box, which included pens, stickers, keyrings and badges. They were really cool!

One time, he brought in a big piece of paper. On it was a drawing of a tree. Salvo then passed it around the class and told us to write on it in different languages. We were amazed to find out that in 5th Class we were able to speak over 6 different languages between us!

Salvo regularly brought in a little teddy cat called Giorgio. He was the Italian mascot! Everyone loved seeing Giorgio make an appearance during the lessons!

We all thoroughly enjoyed the Italian lessons. Salvo was a superb teacher, with great energy, fun and patience!

Grazie,

Marianna O'Shaughnessy (5th Class)

Donations for Ukrainian Refugees

A huge thank you to everyone who donated items before Easter for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Ireland. The donations were sent to one reception Centre near the airport and to Larch Hill Scout and Guide Centre who are hosting 82 Ukrainian Refugees. Thank you to our parent volunteers for helping to transport the donations who included amongst others- Heather Fenton, Rachel Massey, Cathy Roets, Rebecca Syme, Louisa Lalor.

'Moving Up' Day

On Wednesday 22nd June, all pupils will have the opportunity to spend time in their new classes with their new teacher. The new Junior Infants will also come into school in two separate groups for a 'practice day'. This is a lovely Whitechurch NS tradition that gives the pupils a chance to get used to their new classroom and teacher before the holidays.

Science Workshops

A huge thank you to Eve Prendergast, a post primary teacher and parent, who came in to do a science workshop with all of the classes on Tuesday 7th June. Amongst some very interesting activities, all pupils got the chance to look at various slides under microscopes!

The picture below shows 3rd Class enjoying the view!!



All fundraising this year is going towards classroom resources and the Outdoor Classroom. Our Outdoor Classroom is nearing completion and the paving is nearly done. The roof went on last week so it is all taking shape! A retaining wall has been built on the far side of the area which will hold in a terraced surface. Some of the large granite boulders found during the digging phase will now be made into a pond in the middle section between the terrace and the outdoor classroom.

PTA Update

PTA Sponsored Walk

Instead of the usual Sponsored Walk all completed together in Marlay Park, all families were asked to participate in the walk in their own time over the 3 days from 1st-3rd April whenever suited them. Families were encouraged to wear the colour blue and take pictures of their walk and their fitness devices showing their distance. The school walked 583.56 km in total while 1st Class walked the most at 106.26 km!

J1: 12km

SI: 58.4km

*1st Class: 106.26km

2nd Class: 78km

3rd Class: 87.3km

4th Class: 86.4km

5th Class: 84.2km

6th Class: 71km

The support for the walk was amazing and we raised €4235!

Thank you to all of the families who donated to the recent PTA Clothing Collection. We raised a total of €129.

The summer raffle was a huge success with over €5000 raised!



Many thanks for all your support of the PTA this year!



Lindsay Delahunty (WNS PTA Chairperson)

Enrolment Applications



If you have younger children at home, please make sure that you send in an 'Intention to Enrol' form. This will help us to plan for future enrolments and will ensure that you don't miss out when the time comes to complete the full enrolment application form.



Next year's School Calendar



A copy of our school calendar (already sent out earlier in the year) is available on our school website.



Dates for your diary:

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- **Wednesday 1st June** – Infant Induction Day & Meeting for new Parents 11-12 p.m.
 - **Thursday 2nd June** – Ultimate Frisbee workshops for all classes
 - **Monday 6th June** - School closed for Bank Holiday
 - **Tuesday 7th June** – Active Fortnight begins!
 - Science Workshops with Eve Prendergast for all classes
 - **Wednesday 8th June** – 3rd, 4th & 5th Class School Tour to Clara Lara, Wicklow
 - **Wednesday 8th June** – Leinster rugby sessions for all other classes
 - **Wednesday 8th June** – Playball for all other classes
 - **Thursday 9th June** –Open Morning and Green Flag Raising Ceremony
 - **Thursday 9th June** – Active stations for JI, SI, and 1st Classes

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- **Friday 10th June** – Sport's Day in Marlay Park
 - **Monday 13th June** – Junior and Senior Infants School tour to Glenroe Farm , Wicklow
 - **Monday 13th June** – Jersey Day
 - **Monday 13th June** – Active stations for 2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 6th Classes
 - **Tuesday 14th June** – Mini Fair
 - **Wednesday 15th June**- Marlay Park day for 1st to 6th Class.
 - **Wednesday 15th June**- Infant Fun day in school.
 - **Thursday 16th June** –Random Act of kindness day in memory of Jason Miller in aid of Purple House Cancer Support
 - **Thursday 16th June** – Teachers vs Students
 - **Friday 17th June** - Graduation 12.30 p.m.
 - **Monday 20th & Tuesday 21st June:** 6th Class on overnight trip to Galway
 - **Wednesday 22nd June:** Moving up day & New JI pupils visiting school
 - **Thursday 23rd June:** School closes for the summer holidays at 11.30a.m.
 - **Thursday 1st September:** School opens for the new school year at 8.10a.m.