



Abbeyleix South National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Mainistir Laoise Theas

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Midterm Update

We hope you all had a great Midterm break and that you are continuing to keep well. We are all working hard in school, maintaining our social distancing, staying in our assigned pods, sanitising regularly throughout the day and observing coughing and sneezing etiquette. The new routines continue to work really well and our pupils are doing a great job and have settled back so quickly.

Well done to the entire school Community for all the measures adopted to help our school remain open.



Principal Elect

The staff and pupils are very much looking forward to our new Principal Ms. Joanne Jackson taking up her new position in May. We arranged a visit by her to the school on 9th November. It was a very exciting day for all of us. Mrs. Wallace introduced her to the pupils and staff in each classroom. There were lots of questions and a great big welcome for her.

In the interim, Ms. Geraldine Whiteford will be Acting Principal and Mrs. Orla Mythen will be Acting Deputy Principal.

Applications for the school year

The Admission Policy and Annual Admission Notice are available for viewing on our school website www.abbeyleixsouthns.ie.

We are now accepting Application Forms for our Junior Infants 2021/2022 intake.

Parent / Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher meetings **cannot** take place in the usual way this year. We will be sending out written reports on our pupils' progress in November.

Attendance

It's fantastic to note that our school attendance for September and October is so good.

Welcome

We welcome Nia Gyves and her parents Linda and Chris to the school family. Nia started in Junior Infants after the Hallowe'en Holidays.

Cycling / Walking

Delighted to see some children walking/cycling to school.

Headlice

Please continue to check your child's hair regularly for headlice and treat if necessary. All long hair must be tied up in school.

Coats

Reminding all pupils to bring/wear coats to school. All pupils will be out in the yard at break and lunch if at all possible.



Assemblies

Mrs. Wallace visits each classroom for assembly on Friday mornings.. We sing a hymn and pray using Jacqui Wilkinson's collection of prayers from "Praying Together".

Parents' Association

The P.A held its AGM via Zoom on Tuesday 29th September. It was well attended and this is much appreciated. This years' P.A. consists of 10 members. The Chairperson Florence Perrott has already met with Mrs. Wallace to discuss the year's P.A. priorities and how it can best support the school in the year ahead. Despite the challenges facing the P.A. this year, they continue to plan ways to support our school. This is very much appreciated.

Florence White, Chairperson,
Liz Lane, Secretary,
Denise Mezzapelle, Treasurer,
Deirdre Gee and Pat Kirwan B.O.M. Reps,
Sarah Cleary, Anna Hayes, Caroline Quinn,
Caragh Sharma Burns and Laura Walsh.

Google Classroom

We have had a very positive start to our year and we are now using the online platform Google Classroom for our homework. We have been preparing ourselves for all possibilities and have organised contingency plans that we hope we won't have to put in place.



Creative Mindfulness for Kids

During November and December First and Second Class pupils are being introduced to Creative Mindfulness. This 7 week course enables the children to express their emotions and feelings through mindfulness. It gives them tips on how to relax, how to handle strong emotions, gratitude and kindness.

Our pupils will learn how to relax and calm themselves through meditation, story telling, discussion and creative activities. This course is being given by Mary Sludds Holistic Kids, Portlaoise. We are very grateful to the Arts Department of Laois County Council who is funding this Workshop under the Artists in School. Scheme. We are delighted to have been awarded this grant.

Green Schools Update

Great news! Our application for the renewal of our Green School Flag has been successful. We have been awarded our 6th Flag for Global Citizenship, Litter and Waste. Congratulations to the hard-working members of our Green School Committee, Ella Newman, Rachel Hovendon, Eli Reid, Adam Cuneen and Liam Bennett and to Ms. Whiteford who is Green School's Co-ordinator. Unfortunately, due to the current situation, An Taisce is not in a position to hold the Green Schools Award Ceremonies this year. We have received our Green Flag and Certificate and we will celebrate with a flag raising in our school as soon as possible.

Peatlands and Climate Change

Last January Laois County Council funded the Irish Peatland Conservation Council to deliver a bog workshop with a school in Laois and we were delighted when our school was chosen to host this free workshop.

The idea was to bring our pupils to Abbeyleix Bog post Lockdown, but unfortunately due to Covid-19, our plans were paused.

Nuala Madigan, Education Officer with the Irish Peatland Conservation Council developed an online bogland discovery which the pupils from 3rd–6th class completed. This was followed up by a zoom chat with Nuala. She sent us the required links and we were able to ask Nuala any questions in relation to the narrated powerpoint presentation video which she went us, when we had a live zoom chat with her. The children loved it. They made their own bog plant dial where they could identify bogland plants.

We look forward to hopefully spending some time with Nuala on the Abbeyleix Bog in the future.

People First / Credit Union Art Competition

Theme "Imagine More"

Congratulations to Aoife Neavyn in 6th class and Séan Michael McGonigle in 2nd class both of whom took 2nd place in this competition and well done to all who participated.

Our School Website and Blog

Please check out our website www.abbeyleixsouthns.ie and the school blog www.abbeyleixsouthns.scoilnet.ie for lots of updates on what our pupils have been doing this term. Don't forget to search us out on FACEBOOK too.



Midterm Hallowe'en Dress Up!

Well done to everyone for putting in such an amazing effort with the Hallowe'en costumes on Friday 23rd October. The staff had so much fun dressing up too. Visit our blog to see wonderful creations. It was such a happy and cheerful way to end our first two months back with our children so full of the spirit of the season.



Donation

Sincere thanks to Oliver and Sandra Stanley for their wonderful donation of €1000 to our school. We have decided to purchase a table tennis table with the gift and we are looking forward to lots of table tennis. This is an incredibly kind present and one which will be used by many children over future years.



Women's Development Group

A sincere thank you to Mary White and the Women's Development Group who were very busy prior to Covid working on soft toys, filling them with poly pellets so that they could be used as weighted sensory toys. They also gave us lovely weighted cushions and blankets as sensory comforters. The children are benefitting greatly from these gifts.

Virtual Biodiversity Lesson

This week we have been celebrating Science Week and all the aspects of science such as biodiversity on Wednesday the 11th of November. We went on zoom for a virtual biodiversity lesson with Michelle Castiaux. Biodiversity is a form of science that also includes Geography. Biodiversity is about nature everything alive around us. We firstly looked on Google Maps which has taken pictures of the world from a satellite in space. We took a piece of paper and with Michelle's direction drew a map of our school from the entrance to the school to the basket ball court at the back. We took some colours and made a key at the side of the page. We used different colours and designs to represent the different areas of our school. We did a key for the grass, the hard surfaces such as tarmac and the path and the trees and polytunnel. We were very interested in seeing what our school looks like from a bird's eye view. We all loved learning about biodiversity and how scientists use it to track the variety of living species on Earth including plants, animals, bacteria and fungi. Michelle also told us about the bacteria on our skin that helps us live. We learned a lot from her about making maps and keys for specific places. Everybody enjoyed it greatly and we hope we can see her again soon.

By Poppy Walshe 6th Class.