

SS. MICHAEL & PETER JS NEWSLETTER

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents/Guardians,

SS. Michael and Peter Junior School has been a hive of activity over the past few weeks in preparation for Christmas. The classrooms, corridors and halls are decked with festive artwork. Cribs, Christmas trees and decorations create a bright and vibrant spectacle and atmosphere throughout both buildings. The delightful sound of music rings out as rehearsals for the Carol Service and Christmas performances steam ahead. Wonder and joy shine in the eyes of our little ones. A big thank you to all our teachers and SNA's for their time, energy and commitment in making this possible. These are some of the moments we remember and cherish as adults.

A sincere thank you to the parents and whole school community for their generosity in supporting recent fundraising endeavours for our school. These monies are much needed for school resources in order to develop curricular areas and positively impact on each pupil's education in line with best practice. It has also helped make additional activities for pupils possible.

The staff of SS. Michael and Peter are dedicated to providing the best possible educational opportunities for all our pupils. Staff have engaged in continuing professional development courses including special education needs, SPHE, anti-bullying, oral language, planning and assessment, learning through play, to mention a few. Next term all staff will undertake training through PDST in Maths with the aim of reviewing and updating the maths curriculum throughout the school. All staff will engage in Child Protection Training and the new Primary Language Curriculum Training. As is evident in our newsletter the staff have initiated many new and exciting projects in which the pupils are directly

involved such as Green Schools, Food Dudes, Active Schools, School Choir, Science & Maths Projects, and Lá Gaeilge. There has been great fun and enjoyment.

Christmas is a time to reflect and remember all the people who help us in a voluntary capacity including our external coaches from local clubs such as Rugby, GAA and Soccer. I would like to offer a special word of thanks to every member of the Parents' Association, for their support in fundraising work which is invaluable to the school community. We are most appreciative of the interest and dedication of our Board of Management. To our caretaker, secretary and cleaners the school is a better place for you being with us.

Assembly has been introduced each month. Pupils are acknowledged and rewarded with the presentation of Student of the Class focusing on the all-round development of the child. It has been a joy to watch each class sing, dance and act for their peers at assembly as achievements for each class group are celebrated.

We are indebted to you, the parents of our school for your invaluable support, encouragement and cooperation. Our appreciation extends to the grandparents and wider family circle. "Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine," is an Irish saying meaning we rely on each other, we need each other, we work together.

An open, warm, welcoming, respectful environment is one that we nurture at SS. Michael and Peter. As in the message of Christmas 'Good will toward men'.

Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliáin faoi Mhaise,

*Is Mise le Meas,
Patricia Stokes,
Principal*

CLASS NEWS

JUNIOR INFANTS

As our first term in Junior Infants comes to a close, we have all continued to settle into school life very well. We are working hard on our third group of Jolly Phonic sounds and are enjoying reading our first book Look out Teddy! We also have been working well in maths learning about data, measures, shapes and the numbers 1 & 2.

Science week was a big hit in Junior Infants. We loved watching science clips and investigating different experiments during the week.

As part of the Green Schools Flag we are learning about recycling and reducing our waste.

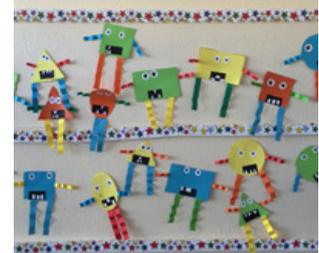
Lots of Junior Infants are continuing to bring in fruit and vegetables as part of their healthy lunches. The Food Dudes are delighted with us helping to keep the life force strong! We are also learning about keeping active and doing active homework and activities throughout the school day.

In November we loved watching a brilliant show about being kind to others from the Wexford Theatre Group. Being kind is something we are working super hard at in class.

We are also very proud of our Junior Infant models who stole the show at the All I want for Christmas Fashion Extravaganza, with their confident walks and big smiles.

We are very busy elves in the classroom preparing for the Christmas Carol Service and some other Christmas surprises. We are all on our BEST behaviour on the countdown for the arrival of a certain man in red.

Merry Christmas Everyone from Junior Infants



SENIOR INFANTS

Senior Infants have been very busy since Halloween Mid Term. We have been extra active working towards our Active Flag by participating in GAA with our coach. Our Food Dudes Adventure has sadly come to an end but we are still really enjoying bringing in our own fruit and vegetables daily, and we plan on keeping General Junk away from our lovely food! We are learning about keeping our school green by recycling and we will be trying to do more recycling at home, but we might need some adult help.

Aistear is helping us to use what we learn in SESE during playtime. Some classes have explored different kinds of homes, some have been learning about different jobs and some of us have been discovering all about Winter and the kinds of weather we might see. It's been great fun and we have learned lots!

Science Week saw all of us turning into Mad Scientists. We saw celery and flowers changing colour by sucking up the dyed water, we saw balloon rockets fly across classrooms, we experimented with raisins and watched them dance in 7up.

As Christmas comes close we are getting ready for our Christmas Carol Service in the Church. See you there!!

FIRST CLASS

First class have had a very busy couple of months. Watching the theatre show, Jeff and Elvis, was a real treat. Carrying out experiments for science week was so enjoyable and interesting. We are becoming very active as we learn soccer and rugby drills from our fantastic coaches. Some of first class are really improving their reading and writing skills as they participate in Literacy Lift Off. We love predicting the storylines in our new books. We wrote wonderful winter stories and poems. We had great fun learning about 2D shapes in maths. We especially enjoyed making 2D shape art. We designed fabulous outfits in art for the fashion show. We are very proud of our pupils in first class who modelled on the night. We learned about Advent in preparation for Christmas. We have been busy rehearsing for our Christmas plays and carol service. All our first class stars are very excited about their performances.



SECOND CLASS

Second class have been very busy during November and December. We have been learning lots and also having plenty of fun!

We took part in Science Week where we had lots of fun experimenting with different materials. We took our fingerprints and discovered that everyone has a different fingerprint. We made Lava Lamps where we mixed oil and water and predicted what would happen. We integrated Science Week into our art and made Bubble Art, it was very messy, but we loved it! We used paint, water and washing up liquid all mixed together and then created designs using straws.

It is now the season of winter and we have been learning about Irish nature during the harsh winter months. We discovered that some animals, like hedgehogs and bees hibernate. We found out that some birds like the swallow migrate to warmer countries while the robin red breast stays in Ireland. We created penguins in art and ensured they are wrapped up nice and warm for the cold winter months. Did you know that penguins cannot fly?



Second Class continued overleaf...

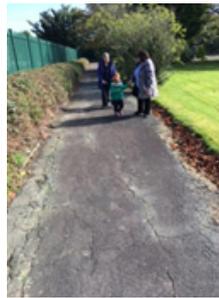
CLASS NEWS

The children in the ASD senior class have been working fantastically since we came back after Halloween. We have been learning all about the Winter time and have discovered lots of facts about Winter time and Arctic Animals. We have started creating the different animals in Art and are really proud of how they are looking so far.

We have also been exploring mindfulness and yoga in our class. Every week we are using the Cosmic Kids website to help us in our growing, learning and feelings. We have done some amazing mindfulness

colouring too as our fine motor skills are developing with every passing day.

Finally Christmas is approaching and we just cannot wait! We have done some beautiful Christmas artwork and are even turning into Santa's elves! We have decorated our tree with wonderful Christmas stockings and we're enjoying singing Christmas songs in school. We have done beautiful nativity scenes and are learning about preparing for Jesus' birthday during ADVENT.



EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

ACTIVE SCHOOL

This term has seen lots of activity throughout our school. Different classes have been lucky enough to participate in GAA, rugby and soccer, which have been taught by outside coaches, giving the children a unique opportunity to sample a sport which they may not have tried before.

On rainy days when it's hard to get outside for a break we have also introduced a 10 minute movement break. Go noodle is a firm favourite. Check it out for free on the internet at home. The children love this.

Exercise is so important to the health and wellbeing of the children that we encourage children to move as often as possible. Experts have also proved that academic achievements can be improved with exercise. A healthy body is a healthy mind. Hence some of you may have noticed the introduction this term of active homework. We encourage as much attention to be given to this as to academic subjects.

December will also see local hero Mary Hickey running around Ireland in her "lap the map". Older classes will be learning about and following Mary's amazing achievements. We wish her the best of luck. They may also "lap our map", running a lap of our own campus.

We hope that everyone has a happy Christmas and a very healthy new year. Remember when making those New Year's resolutions.Keep active



EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

CHOIR

SS. Michael and Peter's JS choir was set up this year. Altogether we have almost 90 boys and girls who have joined the choir this year! Our first choir adventure was a trip to the HSE's 'The Big Sing' which took place during Mental Health Awareness week! The theme was 'Believe in Yourself' and the children sang a fabulous rendition of 'Can't Stop the Feeling!' by Justin Timberlake.

We had lots more singing opportunities such as carol singing in Bradley's Pharmacy on Thursday December 8th as well as the Arklow Town Carol Service on Sunday December 17th! What a busy time!

Well done to all the boys and girls in the choir for all of their hard work.



FOOD DUDES

Food Dudes were very welcome visitors to our school in October and November. The children were so excited to hear that they were coming to school and they made a great effort. All the children that participated were treated to two portions of fruit and vegetables each day. All of the children were very brave trying different new foods. The children received rewards for trying the foods and certificates to say Congratulations for doing so well.

Through the Food Dudes being in our school the children have benefited greatly having sampled lots of new foods and learning about healthy and unhealthy foods. Some children are still bringing in a portion of fruit and vegetables everyday using their cool new Food Dudes lunchbox. We would encourage parents to continue to include some fruit and or vegetables in their child's lunch each day as this is proven to have many health benefits for your child. A portion of fruit/vegetables is considered to be the same amount that fits into the palm of your child's hand and everyone is encouraged to eat 5 portions a day.



"TIME TO GIVE BACK" FROM SS. MICHAEL AND PETER JUNIOR SCHOOL

As Christmas approaches our school community has decided to give back to those who give their time and sometimes their lives to care for and protect us.

This year we organized a **"Special To Me Bauble"**. This bauble represented that special someone in the life of each pupil.

Christmas Baubles were sold at €1 each and they were placed with the name of that someone special on the class Christmas tree.

The proceeds of this initiative will this year be given to RNLI, Arklow Branch who have accommodated very informative and enjoyable class trips for our school over the years. Also they hold a special place in the heart of our families and the wider community. A cheque for €343 will be presented to the RNLI at our Christmas Carol Service.



EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

FASHION SHOW 2017

Our *All I Want for Christmas Fashion Extravaganza* took place on Friday 24th November & we enjoyed a fantastic night. Having begun the evening with complimentary wine & cheese, our guests were treated to a fabulous array of fashion for all ages from local boutiques, presented to us by the dulcet tones of Aisling Bardon & Catherine Byrne.

A huge thank you to our very own Mrs Bernie Hempenstall & everyone at the Wicklow Cheese Company who provided a delicious selection of cheese treats. Sincere thanks also to Kenny's Harbour Bar, Eric Craig Schoolwear & our local supermarkets who provided us with a variety of sumptuous wines. Thanks to our host for the evening, Mr William Hudson, who was incredibly accommodating & generous & to Topline Bolands who provided us with festive props for our Christmas theme.

Very well done to all our junior models: Jenna, Bella, Ellen, Sophia, Ally, Aoife, Siún, Brooke, Taylor, Naoise, Gracie, Mary-Ann, Ellen, Ethan, Lucy, Maisie, Lauren, Matthew, Lily, Oisín, Matthew, Lucy, Ciara, Tristan, Eva, Maeve, Adrija, Callum, Tommy, Ignus & Lorcan. You are all superstars! To our staff members who took to the catwalk; Ms. Byrne, Mrs Doyle, Ms. Fox, Ms. Hempenstall, Ms. Ireson, Mrs O'Toole, Ms Chadwick, Ms Nolan, Ms Prendergast, Ms Flanagan...



you looked amazing & you did us proud.

To Claire Cohen, Samantha Flynn, Lisa Hudson, Suzanne McLoughlin, Amanda Meehan, Fona Molloy & Niamh Sweeney, the dedicated committee whose hard work made the show a reality, we extend our sincere thanks. To the members of the Parents Association who helped out with preparations & on the night, Jackie Brogan, Cait & Sinead O'Loughlin, Cathy O'Neill, Susan Redmond Moran & Andrea McNamee, we thank you too. Our D.J. for night was Barry Ryan & we thank him for his time & talent.

The event raised over €7,000, all of which will go directly into our I.T. Department & provide better facilities for our students. We had fantastic support from local businesses who were incredibly generous with advertising & sponsorship & we'd like to extend a huge thank you to them all.



GREEN SCHOOLS

The children on our Green School Committee have been working very hard this term. They completed the Litter and Waste audit on our school and after examining the results they came up with some great ideas to put in place to reduce our schools waste and litter.

The children went around to the classrooms with bins and labels as well as giving each room some information on their plan of action. Every classroom now has a recycling bin and a general waste bin. The whole school will be learning about recycling so we will all know the correct bins to use. To help reduce the schools waste, children must bring home any waste they bring in with their lunches and put it into the correct bins at home.

We now have litter wardens on duty in the yard every day and they have been doing a great job keeping our school grounds litter free.

The committee are running a competition to come up with a Green School song, rap or poem. The winning entry will be displayed on our Green Schools notice board and the song or poem will become our Green School Code.

Look at some of our Litter Wardens on duty!





REMINDERS

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: We will celebrate our First Penance on Wednesday 7th February at 7pm and First Holy Communion on Sunday 27th May at 11.30am. As part of the preparation process pupils receiving these sacraments will participate in the 'Do This in Memory' programme on 20th January, 24th February and 14th April 2018 at 6.30pm each evening in Ss. Mary and Peter Church, Arklow.

PARKING: There is no parking or drop off facility available on school grounds for either the St. Michael or St. Peter Building. Parking in the staff carparks is strictly prohibited. Pedestrians must use the pedestrian gate to access either school grounds, not the car park gates. The school is not liable for any accidents that occur as a result of people not following these guidelines. They are for you and your child's safety.

SUPERVISION: The B.O.M. would like to draw your attention to the fact that the school is not responsible for pupils who are on the premises outside of the official opening and closing times. This year in St. Peter's campus the school is open to receive pupils from 9.10am. Classes begin at 9.20am. School finishes at 3pm. In St. Michael's campus the school is open to receive pupils from 9.20am. Classes begin at 9.30am. School finishes at 2.10pm for Infants and 3.10pm for 2nd class.

NUT AND SESAME SEED FREE SCHOOL: A reminder that SS. Michael and Peter is a nut and sesame seed free school. This ban refers to all nut and sesame seed. The use of Nutella can be extremely dangerous for children with an anaphylaxis allergy, chocolate and chocolate products are not allowed in the school.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Christmas Holidays: School closes Friday 22nd December 2017 at 12.15pm (St. Peter Building) and 12.25pm (St. Michael Building) and reopens Monday 8th January 2018.

Midterm Break: Thursday 15th to Friday 16th February 2018 inclusive. School reopens Monday 19th February 2018

Annual Parent Teacher Meetings for Junior and Senior Infants: Tuesday 20th, Wednesday 21st and Thursday 22nd February 2018 – parents will receive times prior to the meetings

Junior Infants Photographs: Parents will have the opportunity to have a school photograph of their children taken in February. Details to follow.

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON JAMES DUNNE

As we come to the end of another year and we prepare for the Christmas Holidays just a few words to thank everyone for their efforts in making SS. Michael & Peter the wonderful school that we are all so proud of. To all the staff for your commitment and loyalty, we appreciate your endeavours. This year we have many new members joining our staff including a new school Principal and it is most encouraging to witness the sense of co-operation and good will which exists among all our staff. To the many parents, grandparents and guardians for your interest and support, without you we could not function. Also to all the boys and girls who give so much pleasure to our school every day, you are our reason for being. I hope Santa comes and brings you that special present.

To the Parents Committee for your hard work in raising much needed funds, your support is invaluable. To everyone on behalf of the Board of Management enjoy the holidays.

Beannachtaí na Nollaig agus na hAthbliana.

SS MICHAEL & PETER JS PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

We would like to thank everyone's generosity at the start of the school year for the Nathan Flynn fundraiser, we were pleased to be able to hand over €475 to the family.

We have been very busy these past few months organising the Christmas cards which we have to say all turned out beautifully and we hope you were all happy with the artwork from your little Picassos! On top of that we were out collecting donations for our Christmas raffle and we have some fabulous prizes for you!

We also had our theatre show in November which had the underlying theme of anti-bullying which was thoroughly enjoyed by the children. Feedback was very good.

Thank you to everyone who sent back forms willing to volunteer their services and expertise to help out with activities in the school. We will

be in touch in the New Year once we have decided what activities to kick off with.

We will have 3 Buddy benches installed in January 2018 (one for each play yard). This will be in tandem with a facilitator coming to the school and delivering an age appropriate Buddy Bench programme for each class. This entwines heavily with the S.P.H.E curriculum. The cost for the benches and programme will be in the region of €2500. This initiative is to promote friendship.

Our Bring & Buy sale is planned for beginning of February. If you have any unwanted gifts after Christmas be sure to hang on to them and drop them into the school. We will have one further collection date in January.

Once again thank you for all your support and we wish you a Merry Christmas and peaceful New Year!