

SS Michael and Peter JS' Newsletter

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the Easter edition of our newsletter. As this newsletter is put together, we do so from the comfort of our own homes to fulfil our social distancing commitments and to play our part in the campaign against Covid-19. While our new circumstances are challenging we must remember that our country is doing this to protect the most vulnerable in society and our loved ones.

During this time of social distancing it is very important to establish some sort of routine for your children. Try to get up at a certain time, get dressed and have breakfast. That's a fantastic start to the day for children.

The work that the teachers send is a menu of activities to help your child learn. You may do all of the activities if you choose or you may decide to do other activities that work for you and your family. It's a wonderful opportunity to teach your child how to make lunch/how to bake. This is all education.

If you can encourage your child to read, you cover many aspects of the curriculum. Keeping a diary in this unprecedented time would be very valuable. You can explain to your child how their children and grandchildren will learn about our current situation as history in the future.

Helping your child to work and play independently is a wonderful skill that they can bring through life. Don't feel the need to constantly entertain. Give them the space to work/play alone also.

The most important thing for all of us right now is to look after our mental health. The phrase "this too will pass" is very appropriate for our current context. It is important that we present any information to our children in an age appropriate manner. Remember that the evening news on television is aimed at an adult audience.

I know many of the parents in our school work in the healthcare industry. On behalf of the school community I would like to sincerely thank you. Your dedication to your profession and your selfless commitment to those in your care has not gone unnoticed. To those of you who are in jobs that have been recognised as essential during this time of social distancing, we send you our heartfelt gratitude for maintaining these essential services.

We will all be taking a break from technology and online homework today as we start our Easter holidays. Should the closures be extended after Easter we will resume school work online again. The weekly plan will be sent on Sunday the 19th at 6pm and the daily schedule will appear in the homework section of Aladdin Connect during the week.

I will leave you with one last thought: When this is all over and we attempt to reclaim our old lives and routines, how will your relationship with your family be? Will it have deepened following the opportunity to eat meals with them, to read to them, to have fun with them? If not, we're inside for the foreseeable so maybe give it some thought!

Easter is a time of hope and joy, we may be somewhat short of joy this Easter but we still have hope. I hope all families have a healthy and safe Easter break.

Lisa Dempsey, Principal



Class News Junior Infants

Hello everyone and happy Easter from the Junior Infant teachers!

We are all going through a strange time and we miss school so much but it's great that we can still learn and play at home! The children are working extra hard at home with their families. They have been practicing their reading, phonics and handwriting, completing exciting maths hunts, creating beautiful artwork and learning all about how to stop the spread of germs. They have been sending up fantastic pictures of their work every day so that we can see how well they have been doing.

A few weeks ago, we had a very important visitor come in to see us. It was Garda Therese Kelly! She told us all about her job as a Garda and we learned what the Gardaí do for us in our community. We learned that the Gardaí stop crimes and keep us all safe. Some children even got to try on Garda Therese's hat and body protector. It was so cool!

We miss the children so much and are looking forward to seeing them again soon! Ms. Dillon, Ms. Kinsella, Ms. Rees and Mr. Roche.



Senior Infants

Senior Infant teachers are really missing their children but we have been so delighted to hear about all the lovely activities they have been doing at home.

There's been all sorts of amazing work going on from practicing some of the activities we have sent home from handwriting, to painting bird houses, bird watching, nature walks, cooking, planting as well as doing some beautiful artwork. We've seen homemade sheep, lovely butterflies, gorgeous spring flowers, even some play dough flowers and a few children are making scrapbooks of their work. Lots of children have been enjoying watching RTÉ homeschool as well as doing Yoga.

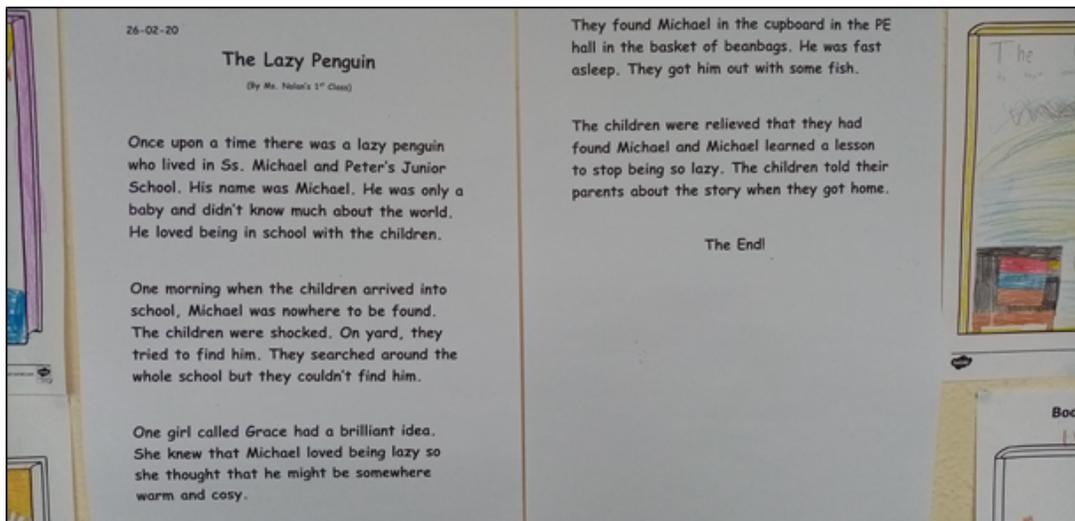
We've been so impressed to hear that children are working together with their brothers and sisters too and helping out at home but most of all we want you to feel happy and safe and enjoy your family time together. Well done on all your hard work!



First Class

First Class have been really busy this term. We celebrated Grandparents day in January and we loved having our nanas, grandads and special friends in to see our classrooms and talk to us. It was really a lot of fun! First class also celebrated the Chinese New Year, this year, it is the year of the dog. Every year it changes to a different animal. We learnt that red is a lucky colour for the Chinese. We watched videos on the Dance of the Dragon and even made our own dragons using bright colored paper. We are also learning about Spring this term. We were learning about the Life Cycle of the Frog. We had lots of fun drawing and making the life cycle while learning all about frogs and what they like to eat too. In science we were also learning about magnets. We did lots of experiments using magnets to see what things 'pull' and what things 'push'. We dressed up for World Book day and had a

lot of fun talking about our favourite books and characters. We learnt a lot about an author called Dr. Seuss, he wrote *Cat in the Hat* and other funny stories that rhyme. First class have also been really lucky to take part in *GAA*, Soccer, Cricket and the Fun Day this term. We would like to say a big thank you to all involved in helping organise these great activities! Some of the First Class even enjoyed a trip to our local library where they were very lucky to take part in the 'Way With Words Wicklow' event. They got to listen to an Irish author called Niall de Burca. Niall told the boys and girls tales in both English and as Gaeilge. It was a lot of fun. During this term we focused on writing narrative stories. (See an example from Ms. Nolan's class below)



Second Class

Second class have been working very hard and had a fun-filled and busy term. The children have put in a lot of hard work learning their prayers and songs in preparation for their Sacrament of Reconciliation which we are really looking forward to celebrating.

Grandparent's day was a firm favourite in second class. We were so excited to welcome our grandparents/special friends into our classes. We wrote poems for them, sang them songs, played games with them and even asked our Grandparents/special friends questions about their time in school. It was a very special day.

Another favourite in second class was when we got to learn a fab new dance with Francis Ryan. Big thank you to the Parents Association for organising this for us all. We really enjoyed moving and grooving!

World book day was a massive success with teachers and students dressing us as some of our favourite characters. We enjoyed celebrating World Book day on March 5th. We spent the day sitting and chatting about our favourite books and sharing them with our friends. We also had an assembly to talk about our favourite books some more and talk about the importance of reading and how much fun it can be. We had lots of fun pretending to walk like our characters in our book day parade! We really loved writing our book reviews on authors Dr Seuss and Roald Dahl and some classes did fantastic projects on their favourite books. We also got to visit the Library for a storytelling workshop with Niall De Búrca which we all loved. In maths we have been learning all about money which will be very helpful when it comes to spending our book tokens wisely!

Spring has most definitely sprung in second class. The halls are decorated with some beautiful pieces of spring art. Some of the children have planted seeds and the teachers will now be kept busy looking after them and watching them blossom.

Big congratulations to everyone who participated and performed their poems in the Arklow Music Festival. You all worked so hard, put in a lot of great effort and should be very proud. Well done to the School Choir, directed by Ms. Griffiths and Ms. Kinsealla who performed 'I got no Strings' from Pinocchio in the Arklow Music Festival too, you're all fantastic!

We hope you are all keeping safe and well and we look forward to seeing you all back to school soon Happy Easter from all in second class.



Ms. O'Loughlin's Class

The boys had a very special time meeting with our community Garda Therese and learning about how the gardaí keep us safe in our community.

They have also been working super hard out on our new bikes exercising and having great fun around the yard. We love keeping active in our school.

The children have continued to work hard with their learning and school work and we are still so proud of all of them.

I hope everyone is safe and well during this time of change and hope to see their smiling faces again soon.



Ms. Crowley's Class

Ms Crowley's class worked hard during the last term and had lots of fun along the way.

They are very sporty and really enjoyed the GAA coaching sessions with Ms. Rees' class and Ms. O' Rourke's class. The boys have great imaginations and loved dressing up as their

favourite characters to celebrate World Book Day. We are very proud of our pupils, Brandon and Kwame, who participated in the solo verse speaking competition at the Arklow Music Festival. The boys are very creative and have been busy making hedgehogs, chicks and dinosaurs in art



Ms. Ireson's Class

Wow April already! We have been having so much fun and the time has gone so quickly. One of the highlights of this term has been using the new school playground. We love our imaginary play there, some days it's a playground and others it is a restaurant!

We have been enjoying regular trips to the library and the magic table as well as the playground.

In our classroom we have been working hard learning letters, colours and shapes. Sensory play with sand, water and rice are also a big hit.

The last few weeks have been very strange for us all. We are missing each other a lot, but we are keeping in touch with videos and pictures and we hope we will all be back together soon.



Art Club

The First and Second Class Art Club have had a fantastic term. They enjoyed painting Chinese Dragons, using mixed medium, a mixture of oil pastel and water paint to create giant red Chinese Dragons. Red is a lucky colour for the Chinese and even some of their wedding dresses are red! We also had a lot of fun working with the lovely girls from St. Marys. The second year students from St. Marys are working with the Art Club and the Active Schools Committee to create Fairy Doors for both our school grounds. The girls and boys of First Class were only delighted to have some help in decorating the Fairy Doors for our classrooms.



[A Message from the Active Committee](#)

Gary Messett will reschedule his visit to the school. Thanks to everyone for their support in raising money for the school. We raised €3896 for Sports for Schools and we will receive 70% of that money back in sports equipment vouchers for the school.

Keep doing your exercises for Gary: Spotty dog, Leg drives, Push ups and Jumping jacks



SEN TEAM NEWSLETTER

Over the past term our SEN team have been working hard on a variety of initiatives, embedding old ones and introducing new ones.

MATHS:

Our team has continued to assist the delivery of our "Ready Set Go Maths" programme. Junior and senior infants enjoy this hands-on programme designed to develop their mathematical skill. This term we have continued to focus on number, pattern, partitioning and lots of games. A variety of these games can be adapted and played at home eg.:

- Pairing socks : Ask the children to sort and pair a variety of socks. Add a few odd ones just for fun.
- Lego Towers : Create a variety of Lego towers. Talk about who has the tallest/smallest etc.
- Pattern : Use toys (cars/lego/dolls/dinosaurs etc) and create patterns. Start using 2 items (lego, dinosaur, lego, dinosaur) and increase difficulty as needed.

The older classes have been focusing on "maths talk" and "paired problems". This is a great initiative that requires mathematical understanding and teamwork. The children loved working as a team and found many different ways to solve the same problem. Again this could be continued at home. Try devise a word problem and solve it in teams at home. Listen to all teams and look at the different ways used to solve the problem. Here's one to get you started :

"There are 6 people in a family. Each person wants a sandwich for lunch. 2 people want ham and cheese and the rest want plain ham. How many slices of bread will we need? How many slices of ham will we need? How many slices of cheese will we need?"

Remember there are so many different ways of solving problems, drawing pictures, completing the task or using sums are just a few ideas. Go on , give it a go.

ENGLISH:

English initiatives have also continued or been introduced. Classes have participated in a variety of programmes eg. Guided reading, Literacy Lift Off, Paired reading, Ready Set Go Read and Station Teaching.

During this time it is important to read with the children. Remember a child can benefit so much by being read to as well as reading themselves.

NURTURE GROUP:

Our nurture group has been discussing "dreams". They have been learning about the importance of sleep. They talked about dreams they have had at night time but also the dreams they have for the future. Their motto for this term was "*Remember to reach for the moon. You might just land on a star because no dream is too big*".

Wouldn't it be lovely to make a poster with this motto on it for a bedroom wall, surrounded by pictures of future dreams? We would definitely love to see pictures of these. Or maybe write a story or poem based on a dream the child has had or a dream they'd love to fulfil in the future.

MOTOR GROUP:

Our motor groups have been focusing on making our bodies strong, especially our fingers and hands. Again, lots of these exercises appear like games to the children and can be completed with all the family eg.

- Clothes pegs : Ask the children to help hang out the washing.
Create pictures with clothes pegs eg. Draw a face on a piece of paper or card and add clothes pegs at the top to create spikey hair. Draw a picture of a hedgehog and cut it out. Add clothes pegs around the edges to create spikes.
- Buttons and Zips : Encourage all children to dress themselves and tie their shoelaces.
Encourage them to open a variety of buttons and zips on toys, dolls etc.
- Spray Bottles : Empty spray bottles can be refilled with water. Get the children to spray and wipe down the table. Spray flowers and plants. Help spray and clean the windows. (adult supervision probably advised)
- Wind up Toys : Have races with wind up toys. Eg. Easter rabbits/chicks
- Blow Football : Roll up a ball of paper/ tinfoil and create a football pitch on a table. Blow the ball across the table and see who can score a goal. No cheating allowed.

MINDFULNESS:

During the past term we have also introduced mindfulness to some groups as a means of calming them and giving them structures and ways of dealing with life. These ideas are a great way to help not only the children but the whole family through this difficult time. One lovely exercise is called *Colour Breathing*.

Colour breathing : Begin by breathing slowly, in through the nose and out through the mouth. Now pick your favourite colour and every time you breath out imagine you are breathing out this colour, changing the colour of the air around yourself. It's a lovely calming exercise.

In this term some children also read and enjoyed Niall Breslin's children's book called "Take 5". Niall Breslin has created mindfulness videos online which might be nice for the whole family to watch and complete together.

<https://www.instagram.com/bressie/>.

_Other children have been planting and growing peas and daffodils. The children really enjoyed the process of planting the seeds and bulbs. They also had to take responsibility for making sure the plants were watered daily and had sufficient sunlight. Don't worry they've found a good home while we're not in school. Planting and growing seeds is a lovely way of giving responsibility while reconnecting children with nature.

While much has been achieved in school we are aware that more is happening at home. We love to hear from the children and see photos of their work. So please, if you engage in any of the above activities, no matter how big or small, we would love to hear from you.

Stay Safe

