

SS. MICHAEL & PETER JS

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2020

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents/Guardians,

You are all welcome back to a new school year and we extend a particular warm greeting to our new Junior Infants and their families, our new pupils in our Early Intervention Class and their families and to the pupils who have joined us in our other classes too.

I am delighted to report an excellent start to the school year, despite the unprecedented situation that we find ourselves in. It has been wonderful to welcome all the children's smiling faces through the gates and doors of our school each morning. The children have settled in remarkably well and have clearly benefited from the time they have spent in the intimacy of their own homes over the past number of months. Many teachers have commented on how very attentive the children are being in class so 'hats off' to you the parents and guardians for your support in preparing the children for the school's reopening.

During the school closures we held our first ever 'Virtual Assembly' which became a regular Friday morning gathering enjoyed by many. Since our return to school we have held our first in-house Virtual Assembly which was another historic occasion for us all in SS Michael and Peter Junior School. Not only was it our first virtual assembly in school but it was also the first assembly where we were able to join together as a whole school - from Junior Infants to Second Class. Technology allowed us to host the one assembly for all our 351 pupils. Well done to everyone for contributing and joining in.

World Mental Health Day took place on the 10th October. The most important thing for all of us right now is to look after our mental health. Exercise, being in nature, mindful activities and sleep are great

for your mental health and for helping you to relax. The phrase “this too will pass” is very appropriate for our current context.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of SS Michael and Peter Junior School for their dedication and hard work in making the reopening plan a reality. From the very beginning of the school closures the staff of SS Michael and Peter Junior School rose to the challenge of providing activities for distance learning and now that they are back in school every day they strive to do the best for the children in their care while adhering to all the new procedures and protocols around Covid 19. The success of our reopening plan is a testament to each and everyone one of them.

In September as our schools re-opened our President, Michael D Higgins acknowledged that we ‘must now muster a fresh determination to give our efforts, as the late John B. Keane might put it, ‘our almighty best.’ As part of his reflection he stated that he believed that the principles that might serve as a guide in our renewed commitment could be based on some fundamental values that represent the best of ourselves, such as Solidarity, Care, Compassion and Kindness. Let's keep these four basic values in mind as we re-double our efforts to avoid infection and to keep our school and our country safe.

It continues to be a worrying and uncertain time for all of us but I am very proud to be a part of this wonderful school community. Every sector of our community has played their part in reopening our school and in keeping it open. As the Irish proverb states ‘Ní neart go cur le chéile’ which means ‘There is no strength without unity’. From our Board of Management, to our staff (teaching, SNA, secretarial, caretaking and cleaning) to our parent body, to our pupils and to the wider Arklow community we have shown that together we can achieve great things. Thank you all for your continued support and cooperation in these challenging times.

Finally, I would like to wish Fr. Michael Murtagh, the patron’s nominee of our Board of Management, all the best in his new position. He will be greatly missed by the children and staff of SS Michael and Peter Junior School, for his contributions and support at Board level and especially for his engaging and fun ceremonies over the years. Go n-éirí an t-ádh leat.

I hope all families and staff enjoy a fun and safe Hallowe’en break. Oíche Shamhna shona daoibh go léir!

Kind regards,
Lisa Dempsey



CLASS NEWS

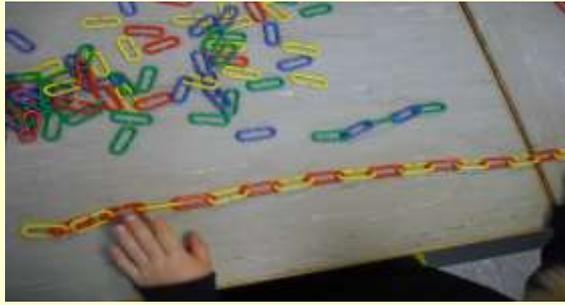
JUNIOR INFANTS

Junior Infants boys and girls have settled in well in their first term of “big” school. We are so proud of them! We are learning so much about phonological awareness like working on our listening skills, rhyming and alliteration. The children are looking forward to getting their first reading book after the midterm because we have been learning all of the words.

The children have enjoyed Early Mathematical Activities, where we have been learning about shapes, matching, pattern and early number skills. During Maths week we enjoyed lots of activities including a shape hunt and following Alice down the maths hole!

The children are encouraged to mix well with everyone and new friendships are developing. Play is one of our favourite activities and we have enjoyed learning through play about ourselves, homes, autumn and Halloween. We are learning lots about staying safe, stranger dangers, feelings and touches using the Stay Safe programme. We are looking forward to dressing up for Halloween and a well- deserved midterm break.





SENIOR INFANTS

Senior Infants have had a busy start to the school year. The Senior infant teachers are so, so proud of all the boys and girls for learning lots of new routines to help keep everyone safe in school. We have all settled into this new year very well and are so glad to be back with our friends again. 😊 We loved maths week, and we have been working very hard on pattern, number, shape, data and using our maths eyes to spot maths all around us. Revision of our sounds and lots of rhyming practice keep us very busy in our English work, along with plenty of writing tasks.

Autumn has been a big focus in all the senior infant classrooms, and we have enjoyed art, music, drama and nature walks to really explore and admire the seasonal changes during this colourful time.

Play is most definitely a favourite of our boys and girls. We enjoy practising lots of numeracy and literacy skills through play, while focusing on different themes from autumn, on the farm, potions, Halloween and back to school.

We have taken part in soccer coaching lessons with Coach Greg, and have loved all the exercise, games and skills. We even played some matches!!!

The senior infant boys and girls have truly shown how great they are with technology, as they have started digital homework on the Seesaw app. Watch out tech world!!!

Finally, we are really hoping for some spook-tacular fun and activities as we come up to our

midterm break. Happy Midterm from Senior infants 😊



FIRST CLASS

First Class have been extremely busy settling back into school this September.

We have been learning all our colours in Irish and using the rainbow colours to help us add up our maths too!

We have been setting hopes and dreams for the year ahead and we hope that all the classes have a great year and that everyone has settled back into school happily. We have been learning all about our senses and learning lots about each other too in SESE and SPHE! Can you see our portraits? We love art and drew pictures of ourselves. We have been learning all about autumn and we wrote a report on autumn too! We love reading and missed sharing our predictions over the summer, so we have been reading Fantastic Mr. Fox and sharing our predictions and connections and questioning how much of a reward the three farmers might pay to have Mr. Fox captured! We also want to say a BIG welcome back to all classes and teachers, we are so happy to be back in school and we are having lots of fun learning!



SECOND CLASS

Second Class have had a very busy and exciting first term back at school!

The children have learned all about autumn and have gathered autumn leaves on their nature walks and looked for signs of seasonal change all around the school. There is some beautiful autumnal art on our walls! In Gaeilge, the pupils learned about 'An Fómhar' (autumn) and some boys and girls learned the poem 'Duilleoga Deasa'.

The boys and girls have enjoyed learning about hedgehogs and bats and animals that we hear about especially at this time of the year. They are also busy creating some beautiful (and scary!) Halloween art to decorate the classrooms and the corridors.

In PE, the classes have been learning GAA skills from the football coaches and everyone has enjoyed these lessons.

In Maths everyone has been learning about time and adding and subtracting and everyone is working very hard.

The boys and girls have been making a great effort with homework and many are using Seesaw to read/complete their work. It is a big change for everyone and the teachers are so proud of their classes.

Finally, and most importantly, everyone has been so good in keeping themselves safe and happy. Everyone is washing their hands and following all the new rules and we hope all the boys and girls are very proud of themselves! Have a great midterm break!





ASD CLASS NEWS

We have been very busy in the ASD classes having lots of fun getting to know our new teachers and routines. We love going on our nature walks and have enjoyed looking at all the signs of autumn. We have used our nature walks as inspiration for beautiful art work. During playtime we have learnt lots of new games to play together and enjoy chasing each other. We loved Maths Week and enjoyed playing all our new numeracy games. For Halloween we read lots of stories and sang Halloween songs.



SEN TEACHING

The SEN team in St. Michael's building are so happy to be back in school. It is so wonderful having all the pupils back. We have been very busy getting back into the classrooms. All the pupils are enjoying numeracy and literacy sessions. Junior and senior infants are enjoying Ready Set Go Maths. Junior infants are busy sorting, matching and creating their own patterns using colours and shapes. Senior infants are busy learning all about the number 6 and play lots of games to consolidate their learning. Throughout the school pupils are delighted to be reading again, spending time discussing their books and exploring the conventions. It is a pleasure to work with all the wonderful children in SS Michael and Peter and to see how brilliantly they have adapted to the present situation. The SEN team are so proud of them.

Greetings from the SEN team in the St. Peter's building. We've had a busy start to the new school year but are happily settled into our new routines now. We've begun maths attack work in classrooms. Literacy lift off is also underway. The pupils are enjoying working with friends while improving reading skills. We're looking forward to a well-deserved mid-term. Happy Halloween!!





OTHER NEWS

Maths Week

We had great fun during maths week this term. We were all using our maths eyes in the classrooms and around the school and this year we learned all about Alice in Mathsland. We loved the maths hats created for the mad hatters' challenge, well done all!



Coaching

We are so lucky to have some great sports coaches in our school this term. In St. Peter's building the pupils are working hard to develop their GAA skills while in St. Michael's building the soccer and rugby coaches are making sure everyone gets enough exercise and fresh air. Thank you to all our coaches for their hard work and help.



Seesaw

Our classes are now using Seesaw as an online learning tool. The teachers are really enjoying looking at all the lovely work that is coming in from home especially the pictures and videos. It's a great way to keep in touch with our parents at home.



No Uniform Day

The style stakes were high this term for our no uniform day in school. Thanks to everyone who supported. Huge thanks to our parent's association for organising this and for all the work they do in our school.



PARENT'S ASSOCIATION NEWS

The Parents Association are currently trying to get back up and running, even if some of the activities will be curtailed with Covid restrictions. Please see below information about the Parents Association and how to get involved.

Who's in the Parent Association?

EVERY parent and guardian of a child in the school is automatically a member of the PA. That means you! The Parents Association also have a committee including a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and a Teachers' Representative.

What does the Parent Association do?

The PA is the way for parents/guardians of children attending SS Michael and Peter JS to work together with the Principal, Staff and Board of Management for the best possible education for their children and to make an effective partnership between home and school.

What does that mean?

The P.A. are consulted on new policies and curriculums.

The P.A. fundraise, doing events like the annual Christmas raffle.

In pre-covid times there was also a social aspect to our committee for parents.

What is the money raised used for?

-We give **leaving gifts** to all 2nd Class students as a memento of the years they have spent in SS Michael and Peter Junior School.

-We ask teachers for wish lists of what **teaching resources** are lacking in their classrooms. In recent years some of the items we have provided include visualisers, helping to pay for tours and contributing towards the cost of the safety car barrier.

-Providing fun days for the children such as drumming / dance workshops and magic shows.

Get Involved! New committee members and volunteers are always welcome. If you want to get involved or volunteer to help out at any events run by the Parent Association, please or email pa@ssmichaelandpeter.ie





REMINDERS

Below are some reminders to help maintain our smooth transition back to school.

Suspected / Confirmed Covid 19 Case

If you have heard locally of a suspected / confirmed case of Covid 19 that may have an impact on the school, please do not approach staff members in the yard in relation to this at arrival or dismissal time. The staff member will not be in position to discuss this matter with you. If you need to share important information in relation to your family please contact the Principal through the office. If there are any implications for members of the school community, we will share this information with you as soon as possible.

Absences and Illnesses

As you are aware it is imperative that you follow Public Health advice in relation to illness that your child may present with during the year ahead. It is our firm conviction that an unwell child should not be in school particularly in the current circumstances. You are therefore advised not to administer medicines (e.g. Calpol/Paracetamol) to reduce temperature readings in order to send them to school. Children presenting with any other symptoms associated with Covid 19 should be kept at home. If your child has a persistent condition, please inform your class teacher about this in order to avoid the condition being misconstrued as being Covid 19 related (a note from your GP might be helpful in this regard).

When your child is returning to school following absences please inform the school **through Aladdin** as to the reason for the absence. Otherwise, it will be recorded as 'unexplained' in school records. Absences of more than 20 days in a school year are reported to the National Education Welfare Board, who will investigate the matter further.

Administration of Medicine

If **prescription medicines / inhalers** need to be administered to your child during school time, you will need to comply with the Board of Management's Administration of Medicine policy- If you haven't filled in an Administration of Medicine form previously, or if your child's prescription has changed since last year, please contact the office for a form as soon as possible as medicines cannot be administered until this form is completed.

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 products. The use of Nutella can be extremely dangerous for children with an anaphylaxis allergy, chocolate and chocolate products are not allowed in the school.

Arrangements for arrival and dispersal times

Overall we are very happy in relation to the arrangements that are currently in place. Thank you to the many parents who are endeavouring to maintain appropriate social distancing outside the school. We also wish to commend the pupils who are acting so responsibly when it comes to following our arrival and dismissal procedures.

Collecting Children from School

It is the responsibility of parents/ guardians to inform class teachers of any changes in relation to who collects children from school. If teachers are not informed of changes to collecting arrangements they will not release children from their care, and will instead contact parents for clarification. If you have any reason to collect your child early, please inform the teacher/ office to expect you at an approximate time. Please remember to not collect your child early in the last half hour of their school day as it is very disruptive to classes as they prepare for home time.

Emergency Contact Details

As you are aware we are now using Aladdin Connect to communicate with you as parents/guardians. Please review the information that you have already provided on Aladdin Connect and ensure that it is accurate and up to date **and** has the approval of the named emergency contacts.

Contacting Class Teachers

By now your class teacher will have shared their school email address with you to allow you to directly contact him/her during the year ahead. You are advised to contact the teacher during the school week only. Teachers will normally endeavour to respond to your messages after school has ended, or at their earliest convenience. However urgent messages during the school day should be channelled through the school office (e.g. changes in collection arrangements etc).

Enrolments for September 2021

We have published our Annual Admissions Notice on our website. We are accepting applications for the 2020/21 school year until 2nd November 2020. If you wish to enrol a child please contact the office for an enrolment form or download it from our website www.ssmichaelandpeter.ie

Health and Safety Matters-Car Parks:

In the interests of health and safety there is no vehicular entry/parking or drop off facility available on the school grounds for either the St. Michael or St. Peter Building. Parking in the staff car parks is strictly prohibited. All pedestrians must use the pedestrian gate to access either school grounds, not the car park gates. The school is not liable for any loss or injury that may occur as a result of people not following these guidelines. They are for you and your child's safety.

Thank you as always for your continued cooperation.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!!!!

