



Dear Parents/Guardians,

For the months of September and October, we have been settling back into school. We are achieving this in a number of ways:

- Although many feel a sense of urgency about returning to the curriculum, time spent on **resettling the children** and getting them ready for learning will yield better outcomes in the longterm.
- It is really important to **assess where the children's learning is at and to go from there**, not skipping over important building blocks that they may have missed last year, or forgotten. This is what we have been doing.
- It is normal for everyone to feel anxious when things change and to have struggled with aspects of the school closure, pandemic and reopening. It is really important for children to have adults **model calm responses and coping strategies** which will help the children learn to manage their own fears and anxieties better.
- **Attention and concentration** spans have been affected by the closure and children need shorter learning intervals followed by movement breaks to gently increase this back to their normal levels.

Promoting Wellbeing In School

Promoting wellbeing is a core area we have been focusing on in school to help the children get back to a sense of normality. Children have experienced the school closure period differently and will readapt to school at their own pace. For all children, it is really important that they feel:

- **A sense of safety in school** – including physical safety measures like 1m distancing, pods in classrooms, class bubbles on yard, arrangements for using and cleaning or quarantining shared equipment
- **A sense of calm**
- **A sense of belonging & connectedness** – Time/opportunities for the children to re-establish connections with friends
- **A sense of hopefulness** – hope and optimism bring light into our lives.
- **A sense of self and community efficacy** – that they themselves and the school community can manage this situation and do what is needed to be done effectively

Children can help resettle themselves by;

- ✓ getting back to a school **routine**,
- ✓ getting **enough sleep**,
- ✓ **eating healthily**,
- ✓ taking physical **exercise**
- ✓ taking some time to be **creative** and **reconnect** with friends.

Maths Week Ireland

This week 12th-16th October is Maths Week Ireland. We have some lovely, fun maths activities planned for each day of the week to bring maths into focus;

- **Maths Trails linked to PE/Orienteering**
- **Maths based art activities**
- **Construction activities and mapping skills**
- **Number fun**
- **Board Games/Mangahigh/Dice Games**



Marathon Kids and The Daily Mile

- 5th and 6th class are inspiring the whole school with their stamina. They are running a daily set distance over the next 8 weeks by which time they will have run a marathon. Everyone who completes the challenge will receive a medal and we'll host the final mile here in school this year.
- Other classes are getting in on the running groove too and taking part in The Daily Mile. The children gradually build up their stamina and work themselves up to being able to run a mile each day. This is wonderful for their wellbeing and fitness and has been proven to aid concentration greatly. Go girls😊

Reading Fluency

Fluent reading and good comprehension go together. When fluent readers read they are able to concentrate on the meaning as they don't need to spend time and effort working out what the words on the page are. One of the best ways to develop reading fluency in children is to re-read texts they are familiar with aloud. It is brilliant for your child to read aloud the book her teacher sends home on Monday every day for that week. You will hear her reading getting better and better throughout the week. This will help her to grow in confidence with her reading. It will also help her grow to love reading and become a better reader.

Forwards and Backwards Counting

Another strategy we would like parents' help with at home is practising with the children counting forwards and backwards daily. Learning to count backwards is really important for children's subtraction skills. Start at different numbers each day. Ask your child what they are counting in school as 5th class counting is different to Senior Infants counting as you'd expect!! We are encouraging children to use their mangahigh accounts for homework also.

Seesaw

Seesaw is an online learning platform that we are using this year as an individual communication tool between teacher, parent and pupil. Only the child's parents and teacher can see work uploaded by their daughter, making this really secure. The children are all learning how to log themselves in and navigate Seesaw independently so if a pod or class was restricting movements they would know how to use Seesaw and access content posted by teacher. Please return your consent form if you haven't already done this so your child can start getting used to using Seesaw.



European Sports Day Friday 25th September 2020

The whole school celebrated **European Sports Day 2020 on Friday 25th September**. It was great fun for everyone and fantastic to see all the children smiling and active for the whole day. A lovely opening to our school year.

Reminders

- Adults please remember to wear a mask when dropping off and picking up the children
- The playground is designated to one class bubble only each week for safety. Please do not let brothers or sisters use the playground while you are waiting to collect your daughter.
- We are having huge issues with dog poo on our astroturf and sprint track. There are no dogs allowed in the school grounds at any time.
- If your daughter's hands are getting dry with the cold weather and increased sanitizing, a good idea is to put some rich, unscented moisturiser on their hands at night going to sleep so it can absorb.
- Midterm Break is 26th October-30th Oct.

Le Meas,
Aoife McNicholas

