



SCOIL MOCHUA - AGHARDS

NEWSLETTER – December 2020.



1. SCHOOL CLOSURES

Christmas: School closes on **Tuesday 22nd December** at **12 noon** and re-opens on **Wednesday 6th January 2021.**

January: School closed **Friday 29th January 2021.**

Parent/Teacher Meetings: See arrangements below. Time slots will issue in early January.

For the full School Calendar, please see <http://www.scoilmochua.com/school-calendar-202021.html>

2. EVENING OF SONG

Our annual 4th class Evening of Song has been a much-anticipated event in our school calendar since 2005. It was always seen as one of the events that got us all in the Christmas spirit and it was a huge part of the 4th class experience.

This year, we have had to think outside the box to create something special for our 4th class children, while also raising much-needed funds for our chosen charity. We hope you enjoy watching the **music video** we have put together. We know the children really enjoyed participating in it.

We have decided to donate all proceeds from this venture to **Meals on Wheels** (previously **Care for the Aged**). This charity does wonderful work in our community, delivering meals to the elderly who live alone in Celbridge. Any donation, large or small, will be very gratefully received and put to good use.

Thank you to all the children who took part in the video, and to all the parents who spent hours rehearsing the song at home. We are really proud of what these children have achieved and hope that this video will be one of the many treasured mementos from their time in Scoil Mochua.

Click here to watch the video. <http://www.scoilmochua.com/4th-class-charity-video.html>

Thanks and well done to our very talented **Ms Jenny Corr** who led this project.

3. FUN DAYS

Class fun days are in full swing this week. The children are enjoying **Art Competitions, Talent Shows, Inter-Class Quizzes** via Zoom, dancing and of course, the big hit this year, the **Helix Panto**. Thankfully the safety measures we have in place do not prevent us from having lots of fun, in a safe way. Thanks to our wonderful **Parents' Association** for supplying prizes for the various competitions, and for funding the Panto – a highlight of the Fun Days this year. The PA have also organised a novelty competition this year – a **Door Decorating** competition. Each class have worked together to come up with a design for their classroom door (all top secret of course!). The designs are now coming to life around the school, and I do not envy the PA in trying to pick winners. They're all fantastic! We have also heard a rumour that we are on the list for some very special Zoom calls from the North Pole on Monday.... Excitement levels will be at fever pitch by the time we send the children home for the holidays! Follow us on **Twitter @ScoilMochua** for a taste of the festive fun.

4. CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Last Monday the whole school kicked off the Christmas season with our much-loved Christmas Jumper Day. As always, you have been incredibly generous. We raised a whopping **€2,050** from your donations. We will be passing this money on, with pride, to **St Vincent de Paul**, before the holidays. A sincere thanks to all of you for this wonderful support to such a worthwhile charity.

5. INTERNET SAFETY

Webwise and **Zeeko** are two of the main resources we use when teaching about Internet Safety. Zeeko have a very good blog page where they write brief, insightful articles on all things digital relating to children. Their December blog is well worth a read. It contains sound advice for all of us this Christmas <https://zeeko.ie/make-sure-to-take-a-break-from-tech-this-christmas/>

6. PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

We had hoped to conduct these meetings face-to-face in January. However, to ensure the safety of all concerned, we have taken the decision to conduct the meetings **via phone** this year. Class teachers and Special Education Teachers will contact you when we return to school in January to arrange time slots for the phone calls. All calls will take place in January, at a time convenient to you and to your child's teacher. We will revert to the normal format of Parent-Teacher Meetings next year, in a much-anticipated post-Covid world. Thanks for your understanding in this matter.

7. ENROLMENT FOR JUNIOR INFANTS SEPTEMBER 2021

Our enrolment process has changed this year. For details on dates, procedures and our Enrolment Application Form, please see <http://www.scoilmochua.com/enrolment-2021.html>. Please spread the word.

8. BOOK FAIR

The online Book Fair was a huge success, both in terms of rekindling the children's passion for reading (our primary objective) and for raising funds to reinvest in books for the school. You purchased a total of €7,228 worth of books, which means that we have credit to the value of €3,614 to spend on books. We plan to invest in new sets of class novels, and we will also purchase more set of books for our 5th and 6th class Book Clubs.

9. IN BRIEF

- This term the children have enjoyed trips to the **school garden**. Tom, the school gardener, continued working away, and set up learning stations for the classes, pots and seeds for planting, explanation boards, and even made videos for the children to watch in class before their visit to the garden. He also, to the delight of children and teachers alike, grew delicious raspberries, which we helped him to harvest!!
- 6th classes engaged in a **debating** contest. They used ZOOM to do the inter-class debates, and the standard was very impressive!
- Several classes have learned songs in **sign-language** to make up for the fact that singing indoors is not advisable. Attending a performance led to a flood of emotions – sadness that the children couldn't sing, amazement at what young children can learn, admiration for the teachers for the lengths they go to in these extraordinary times. Any sadness, however, very quickly disappeared: the children danced their little hearts out as they 'signed' the song, and they beamed with enjoyment and pride throughout! What a wonderful achievement.

- **STEM** – Coding, building, algorithms, problem-solving. Many classes participated in a pilot STEM project with NUIM and Microsoft and their work was amazing. Their explanations were even better – great communication and reasoning skills were in evident in abundance.
- The senior classes have been using the class set of **devices** to become proficient with Google Classroom, coding, and generally using technology for project work. We are pleased to say that we will be investing in more devices in the New Year so that the 3rd and 4th classes will be afforded the same opportunity.
- **Celbridge Library** facilitated several workshops for various classes this term, including STEM and Ukulele lessons. Thanks to our local library for thinking outside the box and working around the restrictions!
- **Class projects** – The variety and standard in the class projects completed this term, throughout the school, has been exemplary. Children of all ages stood in front of their class and presented their projects - a fantastic life skill. They opened the floor to questions at the end of the presentations, and answered their peers with authority and confidence. Well done to all the children.

10. HEARTFELT THANKS

On behalf of the Board of Management (BOM), I would like to acknowledge the tremendous hard work, commitment and care shown by all of our teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff this year. It has been a term like no other, and we are very happy to report that the children have come through it with remarkable resilience, youthful energy and good cheer that has carried us all. The carefree, happy outlook they display in school is exactly what we want for our children. This has come about in no small measure because of the teachers' determination to make school as safe, and as normal, as possible. Well done to all our wonderful teachers.

On behalf of the BOM, I would also like to acknowledge the incredible and unwavering support you have shown us throughout – support which has helped to ensure the safety of the whole school community, and which has helped us to remain open. Our first line of protection has always been to keep the virus out of the school. You have helped us to hold that line by adhering to Public Health guidelines. You have consistently kept sick children at home, you promptly collected children from school when contacted (without complaining, despite the inconvenience caused), you respected any quarantine guidelines, even when it would have been more convenient to send the children to school. We are so grateful for your support in these matters and we are in no doubt that it is the rigid adherence to such measures that has led to us being Covid-free for the entire term.

The BOM would like to sincerely thank the school staff and our parent body for the fantastic teamwork which has led to a wonderful, and safe, term in Scoil Mochua.

We wish all of you a very safe and happy Christmas and we look forward to welcoming the children back to school in January, 2021, to a year that promises a gradual return to normality.

*Nollaig Shona Daoibh go léir agus Athbhliain Faoi Mhaise Daoibh.
A very Happy Christmas to you all and best wishes for 2021.*

