

# SCOIL MOCHUA

## JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER



### 1. SCHOOL CLOSING REMINDER

The school is closed on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June**.

School closes on **Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 12 midday** for the summer holidays, and reopens on **Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August** for all children from Senior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class. **New Junior Infants** commence on **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September**.

The full school calendar for the 2021-22 school year will be uploaded to the school website in the coming weeks.

### 2. SCHOOL DAY FOR NEXT TERM

Our plan is to continue with the staggered start times and staggered lunch times for next year. This will allow for a safer arrival to school in terms of numbers, and allow us to reduce numbers in the yard at lunch times. We will continue to review the situation in line with Public Health as the year progresses.

### 3. UNIFORMS

When the weather is hot, we want the children to be comfortable in school. The children are allowed to wear shorts to school, but to safeguard the integrity of the uniform, we would ask that the children wear grey shorts, of a respectable length. If you do not have grey shorts, then any colour is fine, but we recommend that you invest in a pair of grey shorts when you can. The return to school in September is often in warm weather and your child can continue to wear them then. Don't forget, cutting an old pair of tracksuit bottoms is a perfectly acceptable option.

Regarding the uniform for next year, we will continue with the current policy of allowing children to wear the tracksuit every day if they wish to do so. While we are certainly moving into a post-pandemic world, we will still be operating under our Covid Response Plan when we return in September. So if you do not wish to purchase a uniform as well as a tracksuit for September, that is fine. We will review our uniform policy for the 2022-23 school year, in consultation with you, the parents. See our school website for details on purchasing the uniform/tracksuit.

### 4. STAFF RETIREMENTS

#### **Deputy Principal**

Our highly-esteemed and much-loved friend, colleague and Deputy Principal, **Thérèse Shortall**, is retiring after a teaching career spanning 36 years, 32 of which were in Scoil Mochua. As a teacher, Thérèse worked tirelessly, and with passion and enthusiasm, to ensure that every child in her class developed a love of learning and a sense of curiosity. Year after year, the children in her class thrived as a result of her encouragement and support, and they grew in confidence because of the belief she had in each of them. As SEN Coordinator in the school, Thérèse has been an unwavering advocate for children with additional needs. She ensured that each child received support tailored to his/her needs, and that the support evolved as the needs of the child changed. She supported and guided countless parents, listening to them and working with them to enhance their child's educational experience. As a colleague, Thérèse has been a rock of support to all of us in the school, generous with her time and her expertise, not to mention her unending kindness and loyalty.

Thérèse has a fantastic rapport with all of the children, the staff and the parents. We will all miss her dearly. We wish her every health and happiness in the years to come, and we look forward to formally marking this momentous occasion when it is safe to do so.

### **Special Needs Assistant**

Our wonderful SNA, Anne Hughes, is also retiring. Anne has been working in Scoil Mochua since 2011. She has worked with many children and teachers, in many classrooms, over the years, and can aptly be described as a person who is very happy in her job. Anne came in to school every morning equipped with a smile and a positive attitude, and this was infectious. She nurtured the children she worked with, sharing stories with them, lending a helping hand, guiding and supporting, all the time helping children to become more independent. Anne built up positive relationships throughout the school, among staff, children and parents. We were lucky to have had Anne as part of our team in Scoil Mochua, and she will be missed by the whole school community. We wish her good health and happiness as she enters the next chapter of her life.

**Thérèse agus Anne, míle buíochas ó phobal na scoile.**

## **5. SACRAMENTS**

The latest guidance we have received from the Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell, with regards to the Sacraments is that they cannot proceed this term. We await further guidance, and as we get information, we will share it with the relevant parents.

## **6. SPORTS DAYS**

We are delighted to confirm that our much-loved and anticipated Sports Days will take place this year. They will take place in class bubbles, with the usual races and games going ahead for each class. The Sports Days will take place over **4 days** from **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June – Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June**, weather permitting.

- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes: Wed 9<sup>th</sup> June
- Junior and Senior Infants: Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> June
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> Classes: Fri 11<sup>th</sup> June
- 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> Classes: Mon 14<sup>th</sup> June

Unfortunately, we must ask parents not to attend this year. We appreciate how enjoyable it is to come along and cheer on the children, and it certainly adds to the sense of occasion, but we must avoid large gatherings. The important thing is that the children get to participate in the Sports Days. Hopefully, next year, you can all attend in large numbers.

All children go home at usual times on Sports Days. Let the games begin! Many thanks to the Parents' Association who are helping to ensure that the green area outside the school is clean and safe on the mornings of the Sports Days.

## **7. SCHOOL TOURS**

We are determined to make the most of our lovely locality to ensure the children end their school year on a high note. With this in mind, we are in the process of finalising details of safe alternatives to the usual school tours for each class. We will send out details next week.

## 8. SCHOOL REPORTS

You will receive your child's end of year school report on **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June**. The report will be emailed to you by the class teachers.

## 9. STANDARDISED TESTS

The Drumcondra Tests were administered in classes this week and last week. Reasons for administering standardised tests this year, given the disruption to teaching and learning, include the following:

- Information from standardised testing is important given the vital role of literacy (English/Gaeilge) and numeracy in enabling children to access the full curriculum. Following school closures, this data can help teachers identify areas of success and areas in need of further development.
- Standardised tests support the benchmarking of individual pupil's performance against national norms. As schools did not gather data from testing in 2020, data from 2021 will be helpful for decision making about teaching and learning for the coming school year at class and whole-school level.

Please refer to the **attached document from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)** for important information regarding the standardised tests. Please remember that while these test results provide us with some useful information, your child's attitude, effort and progress throughout the year provides us with a far more detailed and informative picture.

## 10. KEEPING CELBRIDGE TIDY

We put out a call recently for guidance on where to source litter-pickers, as we wanted to raise the children's awareness of **caring for their local environment**. Nowhere is more local than the green which borders our school fence. We hold our Sports Days there, and with the emphasis on outdoor learning and PE this year, we thought it would be good to be able to bring the children out to the green for games, picnics, sketching and reading. Unfortunately, the green is often strewn with litter and debris. **Celbridge Tidy Towns** are out on the green regularly, doing a fantastic job of picking up the litter and keeping our town clean and tidy. We decided to lend a helping hand. Hence the shout out for the litter pickers. Many thanks to the generous family who donated a full class set of litter-pickers to the school. We now have a rota in place, and, equipped with rubbish bags, gloves and sanitiser, the classes are doing a great job ensuring the green remains litter-free and picnic-ready! Thanks to Celbridge Tidy Towns who provided us with rubbish bags and lots of words of encouragement. We are happy to help such a hard-working group of volunteers.

## 11. IAN-DALY-SWIM-A-MILE-WITH-A-SMILE, *with a twist*

As the annual 'Ian Daly Swim a Mile' cannot take place this year in the National Aquatic Centre, we are organising a '**Scoil Mochua Walk a Mile with a Smile**' to raise the profile of the wonderful charity which raises funds for **Barretstown** and **Crumlin Hospital** – and hopefully to raise some money for them at the same time! 3rd to 6th classes will take part in the walk during school time. If other children would like to take part with their families, then please feel free to do so, and make sure the children tell their teachers.

The plan is that each stream (walking in class bubbles) will walk to Castletown House and back (3 miles). Weather permitting, they may even enjoy a picnic lunch in Castletown with their class before heading back to school. The walks will take place from the week of 14th June - each stream will decide which

date would suit them best. Each class will receive a 'Walk a Mile' poster which the children will sign once the walk is completed. The posters will then be displayed on the classroom doors. All children will be encouraged to wear blue on the day of the walk as this is the charity's colour.

To support Barretstown and Crumlin Hospital, we would appreciate **any donation, large or small**, on the day of the walk. The class teachers will have buckets in each classroom and the children can drop their donations into the bucket. All proceeds will go to the Ian Daly Swim-a-Mile charity, a cause that is very dear to our hearts in Scoil Mochua. Ian Daly was a 5<sup>th</sup> class pupil in Scoil Mochua in 2003 when he died from a brain tumour. His family pledged to keep his name and his memory alive with this annual event. See [www.swimamile.ie](http://www.swimamile.ie) for more details on this annual event, and to read about Ian's short but courageous life. Your support for this event is very much appreciated.

## **12. FAMILIES LEAVING THE SCHOOL**

If you are moving from Scoil Mochua at the end of June, please inform the office by email ([info@scoilmoehua.com](mailto:info@scoilmoehua.com)) as soon as possible, as there are children on the Waiting List for many classes.

## **13. 6<sup>th</sup> CLASS STUDENTS**

To our wonderful 6th class students, we wish you every success as you move to secondary school. We in Scoil Mochua are very proud of each and every one of you. You have grown up with us, and we will miss you all, but we are excited to watch you move on to the next stage of your young lives. We have some lovely activities lined up for you in the coming weeks, culminating in the **Graduation Ceremony** which will take place, during school time, on Monday 28th June. Unfortunately, parents will not be able to attend the ceremony. This is in line with guidance from the DES. However, we will be recording the event for viewing later in the day. The Parents' Association (PA) are organising Graduation T-shirts which the children will wear on the day. We are working closely with the PA to make this day special and memorable.

**Go n-éirí an t-ádh libh agus gach dea-ghuí oraibh go léir sna blianta amach romhaibh.**

## **14. INTEL BENEVITY SCHEME**

Many thanks to all our Intel parents who logged the hours they spent on home-schooling during the first lockdown. We are delighted to announce that **we have been awarded €5,600 from Intel** as a result of these hours logged against the school. Rest assured this money will be put to very good use, and for the benefit of the children. Once we have decided how the funds will be spent, we will inform you. We have several projects in mind!

And we have further good news. Intel have informed us that **parents can now start logging the hours spent on home-schooling during the school closure period from January – March 2021**. We know that you all worked hard with the children, so please take the time to log the hours on your Benevity System. Many thanks to Intel for this support.

## **15. LITERACY**

During the 3-week period of the **Readathon**, the children in Scoil Mochua read a whopping 8,965 books! Well done to all the children for engaging with such enthusiasm.

Aine Clancy, a former pupil now in 1<sup>st</sup> Year, won the county Final of the **Eason Spelling Bee** last year. Due to Covid, the competition was stopped at that stage, otherwise no doubt she's have gone further! Easons supplied the winning school in each county with €500 worth of lovely books, and ours arrived last week! Lots of lovely new books have been shared among the class libraries.

## **16. SCHOOL MAINTENANCE WORK**

- During the Easter holidays the DES funded a new and more efficient **boiler** for the school. This new boiler should ensure a nice warm school for all our students and staff for the next 15-20 years.
- Over the summer holidays, the DES have approved a grant to the school, under the Summer Works Scheme, to replace the **flat roof** on the school. This is most welcome as the old part of the school is now 35 years old. After heavy rain, we have lots of small leaks, so we are delighted that this work is being carried out before the situation worsens.
- Many of you may be wondering why a small area to the side of the parents' car park is fenced off and overgrown. Kildare County Council agreed to loan us this piece of land. We hope to use it as a **bike parking area**. It would mean that all children on bikes or scooters - junior and senior children - could enter that area in the morning, park their bikes, and then proceed down a path at the back of this area, and into the yard. It would be locked once the bell rings to ensure the safety of the bikes and scooters. Now that the new traffic lights are operational, we hope to proceed with this work very soon. This will mean lots more parking spaces for bikes and scooters, so we will really be promoting a healthy cycle to school for as many children as possible. Healthy bodies mean healthy minds. We will keep you updated on these plans.

## **17. WEAVING WELLBEING – POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY**

We are delighted to announce that we will be adopting this wonderful Irish programme throughout the school from next September. The Board of Management is funding training for the whole staff, and we have booked an online talk for parents, by a co-author of the programme, Fiona Foreman, for next October. We will issue full details on this exciting initiative at the start of the new school year. Further information is available at [www.weavingwellbeing.com](http://www.weavingwellbeing.com)

## **18. REMINDER**

Booklists have been emailed to all parents detailing the books that your children will need for September. Both Maynooth Bookshops and The Learning Lab in Celbridge stock all of our school books. The School Charges are due by **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June**. You can pay in instalments if you wish – to do this, just enter the amount you wish to pay and then the balance will update. If you need more time to pay, please contact the office and we will facilitate this.

## **19. WORDS OF THANKS**

As the 2020-21 school year draws to a close, on behalf of the Board of Management and the staff, I wish to thank the following:

- **All of our wonderful children:** As always, the children in Scoil Mochua have been so good, both in the classroom (virtual and real!) and in the yard this year. We are always proud of how well-behaved they are, how kind they are to each other, and how respectful they are in school. This has been a challenging year in so many ways, and yet the children have shown resilience, strength, and good humour throughout. We thank them for bringing a much-needed dose of normality, reality and fun back into our lives since the school reopened. We have said it before, but it is worth saying again: working with your children has been an antidote to the virus and we thank them for this.
- **You, the parents:** Your support, co-operation and patience this year have been outstanding. We felt it throughout the school closures, and we continue to feel it since we came back to school. We appreciate the fact that you collect your child with a smile on your face when you get a call from the office. It is this positive and supportive attitude that has helped to keep our school so safe throughout the pandemic. Thanks to the parents of children who had to stay home due to being deemed close contacts. Your support made our job so much easier and we

thank you for that. Working together to keep the school safe for the children has resulted in just that. We have a very safe, and a very happy school, and you have played a large part in that.

- **Parents' Association:** Thanks to the PA for their ongoing support to the school. Though they have not been able to play such a visible role in school life this year, they continue to offer support, feedback and suggestions as we moved from one challenging situation to another this year! Their flexibility, availability and good humour is appreciated by all of us in Scoil Mochua.
- **Tom, our school gardener:** Tom has continued to work wonders out in the lovely school garden. To make up for not being able to teach the children in the garden, he has put together a series of videos for the children to watch in their classrooms, in advance of visiting the garden with their teacher. We are very lucky to have his expertise and good nature, and we appreciate all that he does for the children.
- **Celbridge Library:** Many thanks to the library staff who have been innovative and proactive throughout the pandemic. They have provided classes throughout the school with a varied range of online workshops which have captured the children's imagination. Keep up the good work and many thanks from all of us.
- **Celbridge GAA:** Jonathan Daniels, the club PRO, has been a very welcome visitor to the school every week, coaching the children in a safe way and in line with Public Health Guidelines. Many thanks to Jonathan, and to Celbridge GAA, for this wonderful opportunity for the children.

On behalf of the Board of Management, I would like to thank **all of the staff** in the school for their hard work and commitment this year, for their tremendous efforts during remote learning, and most of all for the care and kindness that they show to the children every day. It is my pleasure to work with such a dedicated, professional team.

## **20. SUMMER-TIME**

The summer holidays are fast approaching, and on behalf of the staff of Scoil Mochua and the Board of Management, we would like to wish all of you a safe, restful and enjoyable summer and we look forward to welcoming you back at the end of August.

Goodbye and best wishes to all families leaving the school and especially those who have been with us over many years. Thank you for your wonderful support and friendship.