



**ST. MARK'S JUNIOR SCHOOL.
PARENTS NEWSLETTER.**

10th November 2014

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I hope you all had an enjoyable Halloween and midterm break.

As ever, at this time of the year, there are a number of issues to bring to your attention.

 **SCHOOL WEBSITE** www.stmarksjs.ie

We hope you are by now familiar with our school website.

Correspondence to you from us is available on the website - Check **News and Events** and **Newsletters** to keep yourself up to date.

 **TEXT-A-PARENT**

It is crucial that we have an up to date mobile phone number for you - at all times.

If you are not receiving texts from us - please come and check that we have the correct number for you.

 **WITCHES WALK & ARTS WEEK:**

This was our **17th Witches Walk** and as ever it was a huge success.

Our sincere thanks to you for dressing the children up so well, for coming out to cheer them on - in such numbers - and in particular, for your generosity with sponsorship.

Our thanks also to the **Parents Committee** for providing tea /coffee on the morning.

Great credit goes to Ms.Sinead Fogarty and Committee who are responsible for the diverse and wonderful experiences the children had during Arts Week.

Despite the recession you as parents continue to be extraordinarily generous and we are deeply grateful to you. Thanks to your generosity your child is attending a really well resourced school.

This years **Arts Week** provided a wonderful experience for all the children.

They enjoyed:

- Drum Workshop with Eddie O'Neill
- Wood Turning/Carver - John Doran
- Music Workshops
- Lego Workshops
- Bosco
- Pottery - with Sinead
- Story Telling with Niall de Burca
- West Midlands Theatre group
- Visits by Librarians from Tallaght Library
- SillyBilly - A Magician and Ventriloquist
- An Art Exhibition
- Nature Walks.

The breakdown of the money raised during is approximately as follows:

Arts Week €10 contribution	€ 2565.00 (- goes to off set costs of running Arts Week)
Witches Walk sponsorship	€ 7268.00
Arts Exhibition	€ 670.00
Parent Single Contribution	€ 500.00
Total Received	<hr/> € 11,003.00

The cost of the workshops etc. was approximately €3617.00

Money Stolen through mugging on way to bank €2400

This leaves approximately €4986.00 to spend on educational equipment, resources and activities throughout the coming year.

Be assured we will make the very best use of this money for your child's benefit.

TO SAY THANK YOU

A raffle for 4 x €50.00 prizes will be held at the end of this week.

All sponsorship cards returned will be eligible for entry and 4 children - one from each Standard will bring €50 home to their parents.

ATTACK & ROBBERY

As you are now aware this year our Arts week was marred.

Our Caretaker Michael Kavanagh was attacked and robbed by a three man group while making a lodgement to the bank. Michael was very badly shaken but we are so grateful that he was not seriously hurt. He, and we, are very grateful for your expressions of concern. Thank you.

In all €2,800 was robbed.

Of this **€2,400 was Witches Walk** sponsorship money donated by you.

This is devastating for all of us.

Many of you, on finding out about this, redoubled your efforts and gave even more generously - we received one hugely generous donation of €500! A sincere thank you to one and all for your generosity and expressions of concern.

Cake Sale & Bank Of Ireland

The Management and staff of our local branch of Bank of Ireland in Tallaght and their Contact Centre - Bank of Ireland Arena, ran a cake sale on our behalf last Friday 7th Nov. to help off set the loss to our fund raiser. We were overwhelmed by their generosity and by yours.

Many of you, our Parents baked, brought and bought cakes on Friday. Thank you so much.

We were informed this morning that €1,800 has been raised and that this will be added to and maybe even matched by the Bank authorities.

Our sincere thanks to all!

THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION & COMMITTEE:

The AGM of the Parents Association took place on Thursday 2nd October.

It began with an open evening with parents getting a chance to stroll around the school and visit their child's' classroom. This was followed by our class meetings and we hope you found this format enjoyable and helpful.

Sheila O' Malley then delivered a Parenting talk which we all found both entertaining and informative

The Parents Committee, do a fantastic job.

Each year they organise or support the following...

- **Bunny Bop**
- **First Holy Communion Party.**
- **Christmas Raffle.**
- **Brown Penny Day.**
- **School Photo Calendar.**
- **Old clothes collections**
- **Teas and Coffees** for various events
- **Maths for Fun**
- **Paired Reading**

However, the bulk of the work falls to a very small group of about 4 or 5 parents.

We need more help PLEASE.

If you would be willing to give a hand at any of these occasions we would love to hear from you. Many of you gave your number at the meeting - **but NO NEW MEMBER TURNED UP TO THE FIRST COMMITTEE MEETING.**

So please if you were not contacted do get in touch with us if you can spare, what really amounts to only a little, time intermittently.

All parents directly involved with the children or in a position to form a relationship with them must be Garda Vetted.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION SCHOOL CALENDAR

You will soon receive your calendars. We hope you will like them.

The cost €3.00. The Parents Assoc. would appreciate payment as soon as you receive your calendar.

CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection is at the fore of everything we do as a school.

It is important to note that if a member of staff has any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child they must now report it to the **DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON** - in our school that is the Principal - Ann Ryan.

The Principal must then make a referral to the HSE and inform The Board Of Management that this has been done.

COMING UP THIS TERM.....

CONCERT HALL

2nd classes will visit the Concert Hall for Music in the Classroom concert on **Tuesday 18th November** - 2nd class pupils have received details about this.

PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS:

These will take place on **Thursdays - 20th and 27th November 2014.**

School will close and ALL pupils will go home at 1.30pm on both Thursdays.

The first appointment will commence at 1.45pm

The last appointment will be at 4.30pm

You are asked to make a special effort to attend as this is an opportunity for you to speak in peace to your child's teacher.

1st and 2nd class children have all completed **standardised tests in Numeracy and Literacy** and you will be given your child's results.

If you are separated - please inform your child's father/mother of the appointment time so as they too can attend. This is requested solely in the interests of putting your child education to the fore.

It is difficult to see all parents in a meaningful way in the short time available.

In an effort to ease the pressure some parents may get appointments for early morning or after school over the coming weeks.

We will do our best to ensure everyone is facilitated.

TICKETS FOR THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

These will go on sale in December and the raffle will take place the morning of the Nativity Play.

CHRISTMAS NATIVITY PLAY

This year the Nativity play will take place on Wednesday 17th December at 12.50 p.m. in St. Mark's parish Church.

All are welcome - but if your child is taking part it is particularly important to attend as the children are always desperately disappointed if no one shows up from their family to see them. If for religious reasons you do not want your child to take part we would ask you to speak to your child's teacher and organise collection / supervision of your child for the period of rehearsal. Unfortunately we do not have sufficient staff to supervise ourselves.

There will be tea / coffee for parents on the morning of the Nativity play from 12 - 12.40pm in the Big Hall during which time the Parents Association raffle will take place.

Money raised on Tea and Coffee will go to a Charity of the Parents Association's choosing.

SANTA AND THE GARDA BAND

We are hoping that Santa and the Garda band will visit us again this year. We are not yet sure of dates but are hopeful that Santa might come on the morning of **Friday 19th December** - the day we get Christmas holidays!

SCHOOL SHOP

The school copy shop is open every morning for 20 minutes from 8.50 - 9.10 a.m.

CHRISTMAS ANNUALS

These are now on sale in the shop: Old stock €2.00 & new stock for €4.00 .

They are full of stories and educational activities and are a really good buy for your child.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Every child in the school has been involved in designing their own Christmas Card - thanks to Ms. Yvonne Byrne and all the teachers.

If you would like to order some please return your order and money in the envelope you will receive - not later than Friday 21st November.

The cards will be €6 per pack - and you will love them!

EDUCATIONAL COSTS OUTSTANDING:

A huge thank you to all who have paid. We appreciate how difficult this is.

However we have been collecting this money since March and there is still a considerable amount outstanding from Parents who have not paid for their child's books, educational equipment or extra Curricular activities.

We would ask you to do so immediately. If there is a real difficulty please come and talk to me.

EDUCATIONAL COSTS 2014/15

We will start taking money weekly for next year's books on **Monday March 2nd 2015** but if you speak to us we would be happy to take it even sooner any way that suits you.

JUNIOR INFANT PHOTOS:

Junior Infant Photos will take place in February 2015. We organised it for later this year as we are aware how many calls there are on your pocket in the first term.

The Family Portrait night will be on that evening from 5- 7pm.

If you ever thought of getting a Family Portrait - now is the time - price will be really competitive and you can even bring your dog!

Each family can book their 5 - 10 minute slot but more on this closer to the time.

PAIRED READING:

We are pleased to announce that **Paired Reading** is up and running again in 1st Class. Paired Reading is aimed at improving fluency and confidence at reading.

We are so grateful to those of you who give of your time so consistently.

We are always delighted to welcome new parents / guardians and grandparents.

If any more of you out there might be able to give 20 minutes in the morning from 8.50 - 9.10 a.m. we would be thrilled to hear from you! Contact us through the office.

In order to be involved it is mandatory that Garda vetting and clearance be in place beforehand. So do let us know so that we can apply on your behalf.

Mary O'Callaghan, Special Duties - English.

MATHS AND NUMERACY

This year one of our major targets in Numeracy is all around oral number work and counting activities.

Our **Goal** is simple

-Every child will engage, daily, in a minimum of 10 minutes oral number word sequencing work.

This type of activity when done consistently has been shown to be a powerful means of improving children's mathematical attainment.

The National Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) website has wonderful ideas and tips for you as parents to help your child become really proficient in number sequencing and counting work. Log onto www.ncca.ie click on Parents box and then click on correct class group for your child and you will see tip sheets and videos to help you.

ACTIVE SCHOOL - ACTIVE FLAG

As you may know, it is recommended that every child is physically active for at least 1 hour per day, 30 minutes for adults.

Here in St. Marks J.N.S, we are continuing to encourage activity on a daily basis. We have started with **Bizzy Breaks** in the mornings for 5 minutes. This is a short series of exercises that include getting the heart pumping and some stretches to keep them loose. We also use the **Go Noodle** website (www.gonoodle.com), which is full of fun athletic and dance activities. The children earn points and move up a level, which challenges their strength and fitness.

As we are working towards gaining an **Active Flag**, we intend to introduce an **Active Yard** during Big Lunch. This will include the children doing a 15 minute structured activity such as aerobics, skipping, dance and hula hoops. After Christmas, we hope to restart the running yard, which the children really enjoyed.

As part of the Active Flag initiative, active homework has been distributed. Each child in Senior Infants, First and Second Class have all received a **Super Trooper** pack, that includes a journal, a wall chart and a letter to parents. The journal contains daily exercises that are a **maximum** of 15 minutes long, and are designed to help children increase their balance, co-ordination, strength and endurance, in a fun way. The exercises are explained at the back of the journal. Parents are also encouraged to participate in these fun activities! The journal needs to be signed each week and returned alongside their homework.

Dance, basketball, swimming and hurling are proving as popular as ever with the children, and these will all resume this Friday 7th November.

Please ensure your child wears a full tracksuit including runners on their P.E day and also on Fridays. If you are unsure of your child's P.E day, please ask their teacher.

Thank you for your continued support and co-operation.

Carla Magliocco and Jennifer Kiernan - Special Duties Post Holders for PE

DRUMS

We are looking at the possibility of finding funding for Drum workshops for our 1st & 2nd classes in 2015 as the children really love them- more details as we get them.

LITTER PICK UP / CLEAN UP:

We are ALWAYS looking for volunteers for a tidy up of the grounds... if you would like to give a hand with this please give your name to the office or a member of the Parents Association. What time would best suit? Let us have your ideas.

This year - like last year - we are hoping to organise a **BIG CLEAN UP** on the last Saturday in November @ 10.30- 1pm

We would love as many parents as possible to come and support this Parents Association initiative. Bring your heavy duty garden gloves and come in old clothes.

If you have any garden tools bring them as well.

We will be hoping to tidy the school community garden and some of the Woodlands.

LATE TO SCHOOL

While we understand that everyone can be late once in a while - we would ask you to **really make an effort to have your child in the line at 8.50 a.m. each morning. This gives your child the best possible start to the school day.**

PASSPORT SIGNING

I am always happy to sign passports. However please be aware of the following:

1. If there are 2 parents/guardians of the child then **both must be present.**
2. The signing must be done in front of the Principal/ Deputy Principal.
3. The form must be filled out in **black pen** or it will be returned by the passport office.
4. The passport office phone the Principal to verify the above.
5. **PLEASE MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** if you wish to have a passport signed - or come on Friday between 12.30 and 1pm and we will try and facilitate you.

RESPECTFUL REMINDERS:

- Put your child's name on ALL belongings.
- Send your child to school EVERY day - if they have been sick please send a note of explanation on their return.
- Bring and collect your child ON TIME.
- Avoid early collecting.
- **Unless there is an emergency children cannot be collected during yard as it is impossible to organise this without compromising security and safety**
- Ensure we have up to date contact number and address for you and that you are contactable during the day.
- Return forms, sent home for signing, to us as soon as possible - and if possible the next day
- Please listen to your child read every night - this will make a huge difference to their progress.
- If your child has lost something please check our lost and found as by the end of each term it is brimming over and we end up having to give clothes away to charity shops.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

(Some of these are provisional but we will keep you informed)

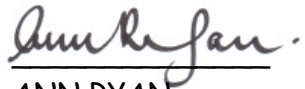
- **Tuesday 18th November - 2nd class outing to Concert Hall**
- **Thursday 20th & 27th November** Parent / Teacher Meetings 2.45 - 5. 15 pm
- **Wednesday 17th December Nativity Play 1st classes. 12.50 p.m.**
- **Friday 19th December, Santa and the Garda Band 10 am approx.**

SCHOOL CLOSURES

- **Friday 19th December School closes at 12 o'clock for Christmas Holidays.**
- **Monday 5th January, 2015 school reopens at 8.50 a.m.**

As ever I would like to thank each of you for your co-operation, generosity and support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Ryan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

ANN RYAN,
PRINCIPAL.