

Reports from BOM, Principal, Parents Association and Parents of children with Autism 2015-2016

Summary from the Board of Management: 2015-2016

- **Welcome back:** The Board of Management would like to take the opportunity to welcome all staff members back to school. It especially extends a warm welcome to new members of staff and hopes they will enjoy working in Newtownmountkennedy Primary School.
- **New Board of Management:** Welcome to the new Board of Management members who will govern the school for the next four years. Each member is assigned a specific role: Hugh McDaid – Chairperson; Fr John Daly – liaison with school patron and diocese; Carmel Dempsey – Secretary to the Board; Lilian Cheevers – Recording Secretary; Michael Lane – Treasurer; Anne Marie Kelly – Responsibility for Special Needs; Karen Carthy – Health & Safety; Shayne Murphy – PR & Media.
- **Good Luck:** The Board would like to wish Fr Belton the best of luck as he begins his new appointment as Parish Priest in the parish of Dundrum/Ballinteer. The Board would also like to take this opportunity to thank Fr Belton for his years of service on the Board of Management and for the positive contributions he has made to Newtownmountkennedy Primary School.
- **Welcome:** The Board would like to welcome our new Parish Priest Fr. John Daly to the Parish and to the Board of Management. We hope he will be happy in the Parish and look forward to seeing him at various school events in the future.
- **Classes for Children with Autism:** The Board would also like to especially welcome our new students to the Pre-school class for children with autism. We are delighted with how well they have settled into school already and welcome them and their families to the school community. The Board continues to be disappointed with the lack of services available to our Children with Autism and acknowledges the difficulties this can pose to both parents and teachers. The Board is pleased to confirm that Jim Jordan (SENO) will attend the next meeting for the parents of children with autism on the 25th of April. Parents have already submitted a number of concerns, which will be addressed at this meeting. The Board is pleased to confirm that the July programme for our children with autism will go ahead for two weeks from the 4th – 15th of July. The Board acknowledges the importance of this programme to our children with autism and their families and thanks those staff who have expressed an interest in working in the programme. The Board is very concerned at the difficulties being encountered by the parents of children with autism with regard to securing places for their children in secondary school.
- **Healthy Lunches:** The Board would like to remind parents that students must bring their own lunches on Early Closing days (the second Wednesday of every month). Carambola lunches will not be provided on this day. All lunches must adhere to the school's Healthy Eating policy. Parents are also reminded to ensure nuts are not brought to school in any form to minimise the risk to a student with a severe allergic reaction to peanuts/nuts.
- **Work Experience:** A number of applications were received for work experience placements in our school over the coming school year. The Board is pleased to approve these applications and hopes that the students have a positive experience working in the school.
- **School Website:** In line with our Green School policy and in an effort to reduce photocopying costs, the Board is pleased that there will be a reduction in the notes sent home with students. Texts will be sent to parents when new notices have been placed on the school website.
- **Security:** In the interests of Security and Child Protection the Board has stated that the doors to the school buildings should remain closed and on a keypad system at all times. Parents and other visitors to the school must report to Karen or Fiona in the offices by entering through the front doors. Alternatively, appointments with Mrs Dempsey or class teachers may be made by phoning Karen or Fiona.
- **Road Safety:** The Board asks that students avoid walking to school along the back road while construction and road works continue. We also ask that parents driving their children school be extra vigilant of those students walking to school and crossing roads. Junior School Parents are reminded of their responsibility re Infant children on school grounds after 1.40pm. It is dangerous for children to use Play Centres, climb trees and run across school entrance unsupervised. The Board is disappointed to hear that the Car Park continues to be an issue and asks that parents consider the safety of our students as

they drive to and from the school. The Board is disappointed to hear of the dangerous behaviour of some students on the road while walking home from school and supports the decision that 3rd and 4th class students will be collected by parents from the Top Yard. It is hoped that this dangerous behaviour stops before a serious incident occurs. Parents are asked to remind their children about the importance of safety when walking to and from school.

- **Capital Works Project:** The Project has now progressed to Stage 2A – this involves preparing for Planning Permission and working drawings. Completion of the new school building is expected in two years. The Board recently held a meeting with the architect on the design team and is preparing for another meeting with the Department.
- **Administration of Medicines:** Parents are asked to be vigilant re infection control. Forms must be signed by parents/guardians if children need to take medication or use inhalers in school.
- **Emergency Works:** The Board is pleased to announce that finally the Department of Education has sanctioned Emergency Funding for the repair of the Senior School Roof. A Consultant will be appointed and a tendering process started in line with DES Guidelines. The Board is grateful to Staff, Pupils and Parents for support and patience.
- **Discipline:** The Board asks parents to familiarise themselves with the Code of Discipline and would like to remind parents and students that any incidents of teasing, jeering etc. are not accepted, respect for all adults and staff as well as students is expected at all times. Parents may ask class teachers for the relevant forms to complete should an incident occur – this would ensure that any incident is documented and followed through to completion. The Board was disappointed to hear of incidents of bullying that are currently occurring in the school and would encourage parents to approach the school with any concerns. The Board would like to remind students and their families that the school maintains a zero tolerance to bullying and any reported incidents will be investigated.
- **Student Numbers:** The Board is pleased to hear that student numbers are increasing and would like to welcome new students who have joined the school in recent months. The Board is delighted to welcome new families who have joined our school recently. The school will get an additional teaching post this September based on these numbers and it is hoped that a further teaching post will be granted based on projected enrolments by September 2016. This would bring our school to 12 mainstream teachers.
- **Enrolment Policy:** The Enrolment Policy was reviewed and a number of changes were made. Application forms for enrolment in September 2017 will ask parents to sign up to the Code of Behaviour and to acknowledge the Catholic Ethos of the school before being offered or accepting a place in the school.
- **Parents' Association:** Thanks to those parents who are turning up to Parents' Association meetings, it is great to see such great numbers attending.
- **Community Playground:** The Board congratulates those involved in Playground Committee and hopes that the children of the community enjoy this great facility.
- **Swimming:** The Board is concerned about the cost of swimming, as the costs involved are not currently being met as not all swimming sessions are being filled. It may be necessary to increase the cost of swimming next year.
- **Competition Winner:** The Board would like to congratulate Yasmin Phibbs O'Connor (6th Class) who was the Wicklow finalist in a National Essay Competition. Yasmin wrote an essay called "Someone Like Me"; it was inspired by her classmate Tadhg and was about promoting positive attitudes among people with different abilities. Yamsin received her award at a ceremony in Farmleigh House in Phoenix Park.
- **Images Art Exhibition:** The Board was delighted to hear of the positive response to the recently held Images Art Exhibition. Congratulations to all the students who had their pictures exhibited. Many thanks to the Parents Association who ran a cake sale alongside the exhibition. Over €800 was raised for the school by these two events.
- **Open Day:** The Open Day was held in the Junior School on the same day as the Art Exhibition and there was a great turn out from new families who enjoyed their visit to the school. The Board would like to thank staff members and students who made this a successful occasion.
- **Best Wishes:** The Board extends its best wishes to those staff members who are currently absent on sick leave and wishes them well in their treatment and recovery.

- **6th Class:** Congratulations to 6th Class students who recently performed as part of the Peace Proms Choir in the RDS where they sang with 2000 students from around the country and were accompanied by the Cross Border Symphony Orchestra. It was a wonderful experience for all the students and many thanks to Ms Cheevers, Jenny, Ms Egan and Ms Wilson, Mrs Keyes and Mrs Dempsey for accompanying the students. Well done also to the 6th class students as they recently completed their entrance assessments for secondary school.
- **1916 Commemoration:** The Board is delighted to hear that all the students are learning about the events of 1916 and that they are engaging so enthusiastically in these lessons. There will be a flag raising ceremony in the Junior School on the 15th March as part of the Commemoration events at which the flag presented by the Defence Forces will be raised.
- **Congratulations:** Congratulations to the Girls' Football team, and Ms Nolan, who were successful in winning the Girls' Football League last Wednesday. This is a fantastic achievement and the Board thanks the students and their coaches, Ms Nolan and Ms Egan, for their commitment to the school.
- **Child Protection:** The Board would like to remind parents that they might seek advice if they are concerned about the safety of another child. Any member of the public can contact the Duty Social Worker in Wicklow, for advice or to report an incident, in complete confidence at 0404-60800 (Monday – Friday, 9a.m. – 5p.m.)
- **Springtime Draw:** Many thanks to all those in the school and local community who supported the Springtime Draw, it is a very successful fundraiser for the school. Congratulations to all those who won over the course of the Draw.
- **Positive Behaviour:** The Board is delighted to hear of the positive behaviour throughout the school and of the reduction in Discipline Board letters being sent home. We would like to remind students of the importance of working hard in school and of completing schoolwork and homework to the highest standard.
- **Home School:** The Board would like to take the opportunity to thank Ms Hurley for all the work she did in her role as Home School Community Liaison. We would also like to wish Ms Lennon well as she begins her new role in this post in September.
- **Congratulations:** Congratulations to the new teachers who were appointed after recent interviews. The Board would like to welcome Ms Olivia Egan, Ms Maria Wellwood and Ms Sineád Leahy to the staff for the next school year. The Board would also like to welcome Ms Corcoran back to the school following her career break.
- **Thank You:** The Board would like to thank Mr Richard Hennessy (NEPS Psychologist) for his continued support and involvement in our school.
- **Best Wishes:** The Board would like to wish Liz Gill every happiness as she retires as Fás Supervisor. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the support she has given the school over the years.
- **Volunteers & Donations:** The Board is very appreciative of all those parents, grandparents, family and community members who volunteer in the school during the year. A number of donations were also received during the year for which the Board is very grateful.
- **Thank You:** The Board would like to thank Mrs Dempsey for the work she has done for the school in this past school year and would also like to thank all the staff members for the work they have done to contribute towards a successful school year.

REPORT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL 2015-2016.

Many Thanks to ALL TEACHERS and SNA STAFF for all the successful initiatives which have been introduced since SEPTEMBER:

- MUSIC GENERATION PROGRAMME
- FOOTBALL & HURLING COACHING
- STUDENT TEACHERS ON WORK PLACEMENT
- TY STUDENTS ON WORK PLACEMENT
- TEACHERS ATTENDING COURSES AFTER SCHOOL
- LIFT-OFF TO LITERACY & MATHS PROGRAMMES
- TRANSITION PROGRAMME DAY TO CCA FOR 5th & 6th Class Students.
- OISÍN i dTÍR na nÓG a joint Irish initiative with CCA.
- GOOGLE DESIGN COMPETITION & RECYCLABLE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.
- KILCOOLE MUSIC FESTIVAL
- ACCORD PROGRAMME FOR 5TH & 6TH CLASSES.
- DEVELOPMENTAL DANCE PROGRAMME
- SWIMMING PROGRAMMES
- FESTINA LENTE HORSE RIDING PROGRAMME
- INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION & BEHAVIOUR PLANS
- WALK TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE FOR GREEN FLAG.
- NATIONAL TREE WEEK
- SCHOOL SAVINGS SCHEME
- INTERAGEENCY DRUGS TASK FORCE.
- PREPARATION MEETINGS FOR COMMUNION & CONFIRMATION
- CUMANN NA MBUNSCOIL: CAMOGIE, FOOTBALL, HURLING
- PEACE PROMS, NATIONAL MUSIC INITIATIVE.
- HERITAGE IN SCHOOLS WITH GRACE GARDE.
- SCHOOL OPENING & CLOSING: Many Thanks to parents and staff for co-operation with new procedures, necessary under Health & Safety, particularly in JUNIOR SCHOOL BUILDING. **In times of inclement weather, children only, will be permitted to enter the buildings at 8.50am when Mrs. Keyes/Mrs. Dempsey and/or Senior Management Team will supervise. No Parents/ Guardians need to accompany children into the buildings before school starts. Collection on Rainy Days for JUNIOR SCHOOL PUPILS will be from THE HALL. Unfortunately There is no facility for parents/guardians to shelter in school buildings before home time. Early Collection on Rainy Days can cause disruption to class Teaching at times when children are organising books for homework.**
- SCHOOL LUNCHES: CARAMBOLA are once again our school lunch providers with funding from the Department of Social Protection. We have applied for extra funding for snacks at Little Break. Families who opt out of the School Lunch Scheme are going against the School Healthy Eating Policy.
- The Parents' Room is again located in St. Joseph's Centre. Please consult our Home School Co-ordinator, Ms. Lennon for times of opening. We wish Ms. Lennon well in her new role as HSCL Co-Ordinator and thank Ms. Hurley for all the worthwhile initiatives completed during her times as Home School Teacher. The role of the HSCL co-ordinator is firmly established in our school at this stage. It is vital that funding continues to be made available for this important position.
- Thanks to Parents who have volunteered to help in Classrooms and at Lunch Time. Garda Vetting has been successfully completed for a number of parents,

The School Year 2015 -2016 was a busy, positive year where there were alot of successful learning outcomes and achievements in all classes with a follow on Whole School Inspection which praised the teaching and learning in our school.

Congratulations to Mrs. Broughan on the birth of Baby Joseph and to Mr. O'Brien and his wife on the birth of Jacob. We wish Ms. O'Connell and Ms. Nolan well on their Permanent Appointments. We welcome back Ms. Corcoran to our teaching staff. We send best wishes to Mrs. Murphy as she continues her recovery to full health.

Many Thanks to Board of Management, Teachers, SNA staff, Secretaries, School Caretakers and Cleaners for a very successful, happy and rewarding School Year,

NEWTOWNMOUNTKENNEDY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parents of Children with Autism.

School Year 2015-2016.

- **SECOND-LEVEL PLACEMENTS:** Consult the NCSE Website for the full list of schools with Classes for Children with Autism at Primary and Post-Primary Level. When children meet the criteria for enrolment and are in the local catchment area, the advice seems to be to make contact with the School Principal and/or Special Needs Co-ordinator to determine the level of resources available to ensure equality of access to educational opportunity.
- **SERVICES:** Discussion re change in SLT, OT and Psychological Service from Beechpark Services. Only those children in Primary Classes, currently availing of service from Beechpark (10) will continue to receive service. The level of service has been reduced due to expansion of the Beechpark service to other schools. Group sessions and family consultation will replace school based assessments and programmes. Parents whose Children have been assessed by Lucena Clinic or the HSE, are being advised to consult these services. Referrals can be made to Beechpark but Waiting lists are in operation.
- **SNA SUPPORT:** Children who have been recommended SNA support by psychologists, now only receive ACCESS to SNA support.
- **July Provision:** Parents very appreciative of the Board of Management decision to hold the July Programme for 2 weeks from July 4th this school year. Thanks to Mrs. Keyes as July Programme Co-Ordinator
- **Extra Curricular Activities:** Given the need for OT and Sensory Activities, parents are very pleased with SWIMMING CLASSES and FESTINA LENTE. Baking, Cycling Programmes as well as Developmental Dance opportunities are really appreciated. Payment can be made for Swimming and Festina on a gradual basis,
- **School Transport:** Please notify Transport Operator in good time if your child will not be travelling on the bus/ is late/ will not be going home on the bus/ change of person collecting your child from the bus. Also it is important to text/phone when your child is returning to school after illness or absence.
- **NCSE:** We welcomed Mr. Jim Jordan Senior Special Education Needs Organiser to our Meeting in April 2016.

Mr. Jordan addressed the meeting and spoke about the role of the NCSE in making appropriate educational provision for all children with Special Needs.

- There was a long discussion re Second Level School Placement for Children with Special Needs. Parents expressed frustration at requests by schools for up to date Psychological Reports when currently Service Agencies are not accepting referrals.
- Concerns were expressed re Transfer Programmes when parents often don't know where children will have a Second Level place until June before transfer.
- Suggestions were made re a System for tracking students by age and level of attainment so that provision could be made well in advance.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION REPORT FOR 2015/2016

Many changes were made to our school premises, primarily at the end of last year's school term, with ongoing much needed repairs to the roof during the summer months to pathways which have been requested since "time began" to zebra crossings and car parking facilities.

With the demand for housing in Newtownmountkennedy we can expect that our school will benefit not only from the continued growth but from class size and teacher appointments.

As you are all aware we have a Design Team in operation at present working on the development of our New School. We look forward to further developments this year 2016/2017.

NPC: National Parents Council was represented by Ruth Prenderville. We were advised that there will be changes made to our religious curriculum in September this year. Ruth kept us informed of the NPC Annual Conference, discussions that were being held in relation to Internet Trends & Positive Mental Health and many other topics.

Parents can log onto their web-site at any time @ncp.ie

Fundraising: Copper Friday, Ann Marie Elliott is still giving up her time by collecting coppers from the classrooms which now have been reduced to one Friday a month.

Spring Time Draw: While the parents association are not responsible for the spring time draw they do help out with the running of it.

Christmas Cards: always a great success, thanks to the families who purchase their child's Christmas cards.

Christmas Reindeer Food: Was once again a great success. Thanks to Grace and Ruth for all their help. We thank many local businesses who also sold the food on our behalf. I'm sure there will be a demand for the same again this year.

Christmas Raffle: We thank the families who donated food & gifts to arrange hampers for the Christmas Bingo in our local community centre. This always goes down a treat with the local community as they support us by buying the tickets.

We would like to thank parents who do give up their time fundraising and would hope that they would consider helping us again this year.

Outside Activities: There were a lot of activities which the students benefited from outside of our school last year. Thank you to the teachers involved, and thank you to the students for taking part and representing our school.

CCA Musical, Kilcoole Feis, Ready Steady Glow, Texaco Art Competition, Wicklow County Council Short Stories Competition, Swimming, Walk to school Wednesday, St. Patricks Day Parade, Halleluiah Concert, Sponsored Walk, Athletics, The Cumann na mBunscoil Sports, The Golf Team, Football & Hurling Teams, Graduation Mass, The Shoe Box Appeal, Heritage in School Scheme, Music Generation, Junior Enterprise Programme, our production of Tir Na Og, Accommodation and Integration of Spanish Students, Bike Day and an overnight stay to Carlingford.

Well Done and Congratulations to those who got involved.

After School Activities: included hurling and football for both boys and girls. Thank you to the teachers who give up their time after school to hold these events.

Already this year there is great excitement with French & Art classes being held after school. We thank our school staff who is giving up their time to run these classes and we acknowledge the huge demand for a places to take part. Good Luck to everyone involved we wish you every success.

In House Activities: A number of students took part in this year Speech & Drama Exam's. Well Done! We had Drum Nature & Music Generation.

Retirement: Liz Gill and Mrs Carty retired during the last school year we wish them well and thank them for their commitment to our schools.

Student Council & the Diversity Committee:

Student Council represented us while our New Parents for September 2016 were being shown around our facilities and meeting our teaching staff.

Class Meetings: Over the past 2 years the way we hold class meetings has changed. Parents have been pleasantly surprised at how effectively they are now run.

Carambola Lunches: The school were awarded more funding this year so children have received extra lunch and the options have been increased. You can change your child's menu at any time by using their password, once you have made the changes before midnight Friday, your child will receive the new requested lunch, the following week.

Car Park: Thank you to our group of ladies who once again last year and this stand in the car park every afternoon and advise parents that if the school bus has not left they must not part in the bus space. This has worked out very well; a simple solution having the ladies there has made it easier for the children and the bus drivers. As you will have noticed the entrance has been widened and later this year we will see a one way system in operation, which will relieve congestion problem we have been experiencing up to this point.

Catholic Ethos: As a catholic school both 2nd and 6th class took part in their relevant sacraments. First Confessions & First Holy Communion was received by the 2nd class and Confirmation for the 6th class. Both classes held beautiful celebrations in April and June.

Our Annual Report will provide information on our recent Drumcondra Exams. Well done to all students. As parents will see from results our children are working very hard and achieving great results, it also shows how well our school is doing in relation to the national average.

School Self Evaluation: Has been reviewed in line, with the Department of Education. Our school concentrated last year on Numeracy. In September 2016 there will be changes made to our language curriculum for junior infants, through to second class.

School Website: A sincere Thank you to Ms O Connell on her achievements regarding our school website. Ms O Connell has given up hours of her time to bring us up to date and..... beyond with her superb redesign. All notes home to parents can now be accessed on our site. It also has class information, photos and educational games.

www.newtownprimary.ie

Parent Training: Ms Hurley facilitated many programmes ran usually in the parent's room and could always have been approached if you had issues concerning school or home issues. Unfortunately this year Ms Hurley has to retire from this position and we thank her for all of her help and support. We congratulate Ms Lennon who will take over this position of HSCL Co-Ordinator and wish her well. Please do not be afraid to approach Ms Lennon if you have any queries or worries about school life or help with homework she will be only too happy to help.

Reviewing 2015/16 it was another year of achievements and lessons learned about today and yester year. With commemorations to celebrate 1916 we acknowledged that if not for the people of that era we could have a total different outlook and way of life today. This was well represented by our children this year as we learned all about the true heroes of Ireland.

Speaking from personal experience students from our generation who came from Newtown Primary School have achieved great success and have become heroes in their own right due to primary education that they received in their early years reflecting the benefit of primary education. I know many children from our village who have gone onto be Architects, Accounts, Engineers, Chemists, Doctors, Nurses, Solicitors, Teachers, Plumbers, Plasterers, Carpenters, IT tech., Musicians, Artists and even a very successful Tenor!

We don't have to come from the "Big Smoke" to achieve greatness we just have to have the ability to read and write and it can take us on a path to achieving anything.

We welcome our new students for Sept 2016 and wish every success to our recent 6th class who have moved on to secondary schools.

FUNDRAISING 2015 -2016

Some very successful fundraising projects were completed during this school year.

- Thank you to the Friday night BINGO players for supporting our Christmas Hamper Raffle which raised €700 for the school. Many Thanks to all the parents who donated hamper items, helped with making hampers and sold tickets on the night.
- Many Thanks to the McShane Family who donated €2,000 to the school from the Seán McShane Golf Classic.
- We appreciate all the assistance with the FESTINA LENTE Horse –Riding Programme for our Children with Autism. Thanks to David Murray who gives us a discount re Bus Transport.
- Our Annual SPRINGTIME DRAW was very successful this year with over €2,500 raised for much needed IT resources.
- SPONSORED WALK 2016 has raised over €3,500 so far
- Thanks to the Active Retired Association, Mini Marathon participants, for very generous donations.
- Thanks to local, regional and national companies and businesses who help to sponsor Festina Lente programmes and Dance Classes for our children with Autism
- Special Thanks to the CLANCY FAMILY who have sponsored an Activity Trail in the Junior School Playground in memory of their mother Ann.
- Thanks to the father of one of our teachers who has supplied lovely granite memorial plaques .
- Thanks to Sylvaine and Bernie for organising the UNIFORM SALE at 12.00pm on the last day of term.
- ALL OFFERS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS, no matter how small, are always gratefully appreciated.
- Thanks to All the Groups using the school premises out of school hours for their financial contributions.
- IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR FUNDRAISING, please write to the Board of Management with your plans or discuss ideas with the Parents' Association.