



## November/December Newsletter

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we move through November and December, there is plenty happening at St. Joseph's National School. This newsletter provides updates on recent activities, upcoming events, and important dates to remember as we prepare to wrap up the term. From classroom projects to school events and seasonal preparations, we aim to keep you informed about what's happening in the school community.

Thank you for your continued support as we approach the close of another busy term.

### Dates for your Diary

#### General Election

School will be closed to pupils on **Friday 29<sup>th</sup>** due to the General Election.

#### Christmas Plays and Concert

- Christmas plays will take place on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December and Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December** commencing at **10:30AM**. Dress rehearsals will take place on Mon. 16<sup>th</sup> December.

#### Swimming

- 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Class: every Friday until Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December (Note lesson will take place on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November due to the General Election that Friday)
- Junior Infants and 4<sup>th</sup> Class: Starting Friday January 10<sup>th</sup> for 8 Weeks (Cost €90 including bus). If parents of Junior Infant class are available to help with children changing please let Ms Rynne know.

#### School Closure

Christmas Holidays: Closing on Fri. 20th Dec. @ **12noon**. School re-opens Mon. 6<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2025.

#### Parent Teacher Meetings

Our annual Parent/Teacher meeting will take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025

#### Communication With School

Phone Number: 065-7084414

E-mail: [office@stjosephsimm.ie](mailto:office@stjosephsimm.ie) (note change of email address)

Website: [www.stjosephsimm.ie](http://www.stjosephsimm.ie)

Please ensure that Trish in the school office has up to date contact details on file for all parents of our students.

#### The Month of November

During the month of November we remember the dead. Fr. Donagh has visited the school and facilitated a service with the children of the senior classes to acknowledge all those who have died. We particularly remember any of our families who have suffered recent loss in their lives.

### **Aladdin**

Aladdin is the best way to keep informed of what's happening in the school. Please pay attention to all notices issued on Aladdin.

### **New Website/Email addresses**

Please be aware of our new email address and website. The website will be updated with news and events. Our school calendar with closure dates and important events is on the website.

### **Christmas Concert and Christmas jumper day**

The dates of our Annual Christmas Concert are Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec. and Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. starting at 10.30 am. The stage will soon be built, rehearsals are in full swing and we look forward to welcoming you to our show on those dates. Teachers would appreciate if parents helped out with the sourcing of costumes and also rehearsing any songs, lines or Christmas carols at home. Parents taking children home after the concert are asked to inform their classroom teacher.

Parents are asked to make a donation on the day when coming to watch the play. The school is finding it increasingly difficult to meet rising costs in the face of a capitation grant that isn't fit for purpose. The Christmas concert is an important fundraiser in this regard.

Children are invited to dress up in festive clothing/wear a Christmas Jumper on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December, in recognition of the hard work children put in for the Christmas plays and parents donations for the Christmas concert.

### **Upcoming Election**

We would ask parents to consider asking our esteemed politicians why education has fallen down the list of priorities in Ireland.

In Ireland our primary schools are chronically underfunded and have to regularly fundraise to meet rising costs and expenses.

Our class sizes are the largest in the EU. In the recent budget the current Government declined to reduce our average class size by one pupil. This continues to leave our classes overcrowded, which despite our best efforts, is to the detriment of the educational outcomes of each primary school pupil.

The next government must take decisive action to tackle Ireland's overcrowded classes, which remain the largest in the European Union. With an average of 22.5 pupils per class, compared to the EU average of 19 our education system is under strain, affecting both teachers and students alike.

### **Traditional Music Classes**

Music classes for 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> classes with Bríd O'Donoghue continue. Children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class have been really enjoying the lessons with Bríd as they build their repertoire of tunes and songs in the run up to Christmas.

### **Christmas Shoebox Appeal**

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the parents and families who generously contributed to this year's Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Your thoughtful donations will bring joy and hope to children in need, making a real difference this festive season. Your support reflects the wonderful spirit of giving in our school community, and we are truly grateful.

### **Spooky Stroll**

Thanks to all the children who made a great effort as part of the Spooky Stroll before the Halloween Break. Congratulations to Aoibheann McGovern who won a special prize of a signed Clare Jersey for her creative outfit!

### **Coffee Morning**

Our Annual School Coffee Morning Fundraiser held in the school on Thurs. 10<sup>th</sup> Oct. was a great success. We donated €1,090 to Milford care Centre which will go towards patient comfort and care services. Thanks to everyone who supported this very worthy cause.

### **Sports**

Congratulations to all the children who represented the school recently in Girls and Boys Gaelic Football and Schools Cross Country. Thanks to Mr. Garrahy who continues to coach our sports teams. A special word of congratulations to Mia Kelly, 4<sup>th</sup> class pupil who won her individual race in the county finals.

### **Dancing**

Best of luck to Ella Mae Curtin and Fiadh Smith who take part in the Munster Irish Dancing Competition this week in Killarney, Co. Kerry. Please share with us the news of your success in any sporting field and we will celebrate together.

### **Mini Scientist**

Congratulations to the boys and girls of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class who recently participated in the Intel Mini Scientist Project. The standard of the projects was incredible and is a real credit to the pupils.

A special word of congratulations goes to Erin Jones, Adele Madigan and Erin Hollitzer. The group was chosen by a group of independent judges to represent the school in the Finals of the Intel Mini Scientist competition in Dublin in the New Year. Their project on the healing benefits of local ingredients was a resounding success.

### **Mission Week**

Thanks to Father Donagh and the visiting priests who welcomed the pupils of the school for different events during Mission Week. The boys and girls planted a tree to highlight the positive role our young children play in our lives and in our community

### **Parent Teacher Meetings**

Our annual Parent/Teacher meeting will take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 between 2 and 5pm. School will close at 2pm for all students on both of these days. There will be an option of either a face to face parent teacher meeting or a phone call with the class teacher.

Meeting slots will be released via the Aladdin App in January. Parents will be able to choose a time to meet a teacher that suits them. These slots will be reserved on a first come first served basis.

### **Code of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying**

#### **Creating a Positive Learning Environment for All Pupils**

At St. Joseph's National School, we are committed to providing a nurturing and positive learning environment for all our pupils. In line with the Wellbeing Framework for Irish Primary Schools, we expect all children to treat each other with kindness and respect, contributing to a safe and supportive school community. As part of our commitment, children receive regular anti-bullying lessons, and we maintain a strict policy where bullying of any kind is not tolerated. We appreciate your support in reinforcing these values at home, helping us ensure a positive experience for every child at our school.

### **Smart phones**

No phones of any kind are permitted at school. Any child found with a phone will have their phone confiscated.

### **Communion/Confirmation**

Dates have been published on the website under the Calendar section.

## **Pedestrian Crossing**

### **Our Pedestrian Crossing – Keep our Children Safe**

- ✓ Parents should not park on or near the pedestrian crossing when dropping off or picking up their children.
- ✓ Parents should park on the road to the e-town to drop off and pick up.
- ✓ Parents may walk to the pedestrian crossing with their children and walk across the crossing with them if they wish.

## **Road Safety**

With the changing of the clocks the evenings get darker earlier. If your child is walking or cycling to school please make sure they wear high viz. jackets/armbands while on the road. Remember "Be safe, Be seen." High Viz. vests and armbands are available in the school office.

Please keep your children safe on the road.

## **School Attendance**

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 you must make sure that your child attends school regularly. If your child is absent from school for any reason you must send in a note of absence to the school. There is a legal obligation on schools to report absences of 20 days or more to TÚSLA (Child and Family Agency).

## **Green Schools**

This year our Green Schools Team is busy working on the theme of Global Citizenship. I would like to welcome on board our new Green Schools committee members Rosie Downes, Tadhg Reidy, Daniel Eustace, Rebecca Foran, Hugo Rogers and Neasa Shannon. Currently the students from first to sixth class are busy designing avatars embracing the theme of Global Citizenship. Please make sure to take plenty of photos as you work through the various stages of creating your avatars. These photos can be e-mailed to the school e-mail a.s.a.p. Thank you also to the students from fifth and sixth class who empty the bins and manage the recycling and compost needs of our school.

## **Used Batteries and Stamps**

As part of our Green Schools policy the school is constantly recycling batteries and stamps. Please send in any used batteries or stamps and we will recycle them. Thank you to everyone who recycles batteries with us. Our large school container was collected recently. This collection helps raise money for Barretstown.

As we look ahead to the Christmas holidays, we wish all our students, families, and staff a peaceful and joyful festive season. May this special time bring rest, reflection, and happiness to all. Thank you for your continued support throughout the year, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year, refreshed and ready for the term ahead. Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain Faoi Mhaise Daoibh!

Yours Sincerely,

Joe O Reilly.  
Principal.