St Joseph's National School
Newsletter

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 winter period.

Dates for your Diary

- Girls Football Final in Cusack Park: **11:15AM v** Scoil Réalt na Mara **on Tuesday 10th November.** All children can wear in their Miltown GAA jerseys/gear and bring as much colour and noise as the want on the day.

- **Art Competetion**
  The closing date for our unique school art competition has been extended to **Wednesday 11th November.** Children are asked to draw and colour a representation of our school, St. Joseph's National School, Miltown Malbay. Children should make sure that our school is identifiable in their drawing, either by the activities that we do, the school building, MUGA or crest. The **A4 landscape** picture should embody everything that makes our school the place that it is.

  There is a prize of €50 Smyths Toy voucher for the winning entry. The winning entry will also be framed and on permanent display in our school and in the Clare Education Centre.

- Strike: School Closed for Public Sector Strike day on **Thursday 12th November** (please note this is subject to change if agreement is reached).

- Cross Country Finals: **Tuesday 17th November in Lees Road at 11AM.** Mr. Garrahy will inform parents of children who will be attending.

- Final date to request a Christmas annual (cost €3) is **Friday 20th November.**

- **Tuesday 24th November**: School Closure for Staff Curriculum Training

- **Christmas Plays.** I am delighted to announce that our Christmas Plays return this year. Children are busy learning their lines and rehearsals will soon begin. A huge word of thanks goes to the teachers for all the effort they put in to producing the plays. I would like to extend sincere gratitude to Simon Dennehy who is designing and making a new stage for our school. The school is indebted to Simon for all of the time and effort he gives generously to us. Parents, grandparents and wider family all welcome.

  The timetable for the plays is as follows;

- Tuesday 15th December: Dress Rehearsals (Children and Staff only)
- **Wednesday 16th December:** Performance 1 (Starting 10:30AM)
- **Thursday 17th December:** Performance 2 (Starting 10:30 AM)

- Parents are asked to make a small donation on the day when coming to watch the plays. 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 Plays are an important fundraiser in this regard.

- The School will close for two weeks on **Tuesday 22nd December closing at 12pm** (No hot lunches this day).
- School re-opens for Term 2 on **Wednesday 6th January 2027**

- Parent Teacher Meetings: **Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th January.** School will close at 2pm both days.

Swimming

- **1st and 6th Class** are currently attending swimming lessons every Friday until Friday 18th December

- **Senior Infants and 5th Class:** Starting after Christmas for 7 Weeks (Cost €110 including bus). If parents of Senior Infant class are available to help with children changing please come along and be at the pool for 10:50AM

Calendar

- For a full list of school closures and important upcoming dates please see the Calendar tab on the school website www.stjosephsmm.ie

Parent Teacher Meetings
Our annual Parent/Teacher meeting will take place on **Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th January 2026.** The school will close for all pupils at 2pm on these days. Meeting slots will be allocated to parents via Aladdin closer to the time.

Launch of Agree to Agree
The school is proud to have launched its Agree to Agree project before the Halloween break. We are grateful to all parents who attended this important event in the school. Thanks to Mr. Garrahy and Orla Walsh who joined Mr. O Reilly in attending a number of meetings over the past year to help put our new agreement in place.

Each child will have their own Agree to Agree booklet to bring home, read and sign with their parents. The agreement covers a lot with the main point being that we all pledge to wait until secondary school to get a smart phone and that all smart devices are co-owned. Even Santa is in on the deal, he knows that only parents can purchase co-owned smart devices when the time is right.

New Teacher
The school is delighted to announce that we made a successful appeal for an additional teacher due to an increase in our numbers. This teacher will be appointed initially on a temporary basis. 5th and 6th class are now in separate rooms.

Climate Action Summer Work Scheme
In amazing news, the school is one of only 3 in county Clare to have been chosen for the Climate Action Summer Work Scheme. We hope to upgrade almost all of our external windows and doors and internal doors. This substantial project will take place during the summer of 2027. Special thanks must go to Tomás McKenna of McKenna Engineering for all his help and advice during the project application.

Communication With School

Phone Number: 065-7084414
E-mail: office@stjosephsmm.ie
Website: www.stjosephsmm.ie
Please ensure that Trish in the school office has up to date contact details on file for all parents of our students.

Forever Friends PreSchool

The school wishes to announce that Forever Friends Preschool has two places which have recently become available for the current pre-school year 2026-7. Forever Friends are now accepting enrolments for the 2027/8 school year. For more information, please contact Kate Looney on 087 7782538. Please share this information with friends who might be interested.

Scholastic Book Club

The school is currently running a book club in collaboration with www.scholastic.ie/bookclub . Parents can visit the website and order books for their child. If they choose their school as St. Joseph's National School, Miltown Malbay, the books will be delivered to the school and we will get book credit to buy more books for the school.

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.

Christmas jumper day

Children are invited to dress up in festive clothing/wear a **Christmas Jumper on Tuesday 22nd December**, in recognition of the hard work children put in for the Christmas recital and parents donations for the same. Children do not need to make a donation on this day.

Traditional Music Classes

Music classes for **1st-6th classes** with Bríd O'Donoghue continue. Children from 1st to 6th class have been really enjoying the lessons with Bríd as they build their repertoire of tunes and songs in the run up to Christmas. Can all parents please ensure they have made the contribution of €30. Please note for Music classes this is cash only, and payment should be made before 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. **The final day to bring in a shoebox is Wednesday 11th November.**

Spooky Stroll

Thanks to all the children who made a great effort as part of the Spooky Stroll before the Halloween Break. Congratulations to all the pupils who won special prizes on the day.

Coffee Morning

Our Annual School Coffee Morning Fundraiser held in the school on Thurs. 8th Oct. was a great success. We donated €1000 (rounded up by the schoool to Milford care Centre. This money 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. Best of luck to the girls football team who will contest the Division 3 Boys Cumann na mBunscoil finals in Cusack Park on **Tuesday 10th November**. Bring it home girls!

Best of luck also to the pupils who will represent the school in the cross country finals in Lee's Road on **Tuesday 17th November.**

Parent Teacher Meetings

Our annual Parent/Teacher meeting will take place on **Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th January 2027 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.

Anti Bullying Month

The Bí Cineálta anti bullying policy was celebrated last month as part of Anti-Bullying Month. 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.

Confirmation: Friday 12th March @ 11AM in St. Joseph's Church Miltown Malbay.
Communion: Saturday 24th April @ 11AM in St. Joseph's Church Miltown Malbay.

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

At school we are making a big effort to separate our waste in to the appropriate waste bins (recyclable, general and compost. We would appreciate if parents can mirror this good practice at home to ensure children are cognisant of the importance of disposing of waste in an appropriate manner.

We continue to recycle plastic bottles and cans at school and would appreciate if parents would consider sending in their recyclable bottles and cans to the school.

Ms. Cotter is currently putting steps in place to elect our new Green Schools committee. Ms Cotter is also collecting entries for a Green Schools poster competition. She will call around to classes next week to explain more to the children.

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.