



November 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is already mid-November and time is flying along! With the ongoing pandemic, circumstances continue to be challenging for all in our school community currently but we do hope that everybody is doing well and staying positive. Please read on to keep up to date with the latest information here in St. Fintan's NS.

Best wishes,

Mr. Caulfield, Principal

- **COVID-19 Cases and Safety:** As you will likely know, there have been a number of confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 amongst our school pupils recently. Please note that the following:
 - Currently the only way that we are informed of cases amongst pupils is when parents tell us. We do not get this information from the HSE at present.
 - We are not currently directed to communicate information about known confirmed positive cases to parents / guardians and the HSE do not conduct contact tracing through mainstream schools or class pods etc. at present.
 - We are aware however that some parents are choosing to inform others through class WhatsApp groups if their own child tests positive. I know that many parents appreciate these communications. Thank you to all parents who have informed us about their own children's positive tests. In school, we believe that the more information that is shared, the better we can work together to keep each other safe.
 - Please continue to strictly follow all COVID-19 safety procedures including wearing masks when onsite at the school. We respectfully ask parents not to congregate in the yard in the mornings and not to walk across class lines. Please just drop your child and leave as the yard is supervised from 8.40am onwards. Thank you to all who are respecting our safety procedures.
- **Pupils completing schoolwork when absent for COVID-19 related reasons:** Should you inform us that your child will be absent for a period due to getting a positive test or their being a "close contact", the following will happen:
 - Your child's class teacher will provide suggested work for those days of absence.
 - This work will focus on core subjects and will be sent to you digitally.

- Your child's box of class books and materials will be available for collection from the date on which you inform us of the COVID related absence, should you choose to do so.
 - Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee video calls for all pupils absent due to COVID-19 as we simply do not have sufficient teachers available. Teachers in school must still daily teach their class groups or their support / special education groups. As you will likely have heard reported in the media, there is a national shortage of substitute teachers too at the moment.
 - I want to thank all of our super staff for their adaptability and "can do" attitude during recent very difficult times, in ensuring continuity of educational provision for our pupils. Thank you to our support teachers especially, who have shown great adaptability in taking classes when absolutely necessary from time to time.
 - Thanks also to you the parents of course, for your understanding, as we work together through this very challenging period for all schools and wider society.
- **A huge thank you again to all who supported our sponsored walk before midterm break:** The walk raised over €10,000!!! This is amazing and the money raised is being spent on the purchase of additional iPads for pupil use. We look forward soon to communicating our vision for enhancing the outdoor school space for pupils too. Discussions on these matters will commence soon with our Students' Council.
 - **A huge thank you to all parents who have made a voluntary contribution to the school too!**
 - **As Christmas approaches, the school will be delighted to provide a gift to each pupil of "an age and stage appropriate" Christmas annual.** This will be a nice treat from the school for the children (and educational too!) after another challenging year for all.
 - **Orders have been processed for our recent pupil designed Christmas cards project:** Thanks to our parent helpers for giving their time to this project too.
 - **Applications for St. Fintan's NS junior infants 2022 intake are now being accepted.** All relevant information can be viewed on our school website www.stfintansns.ie by clicking into the *Policies and Documents – Application for Admission* section. Applications for next year's junior infants are accepted up to Monday 31st January 2022 at 2.30pm.

