

The latest updates and stories from Edenderry, delivered straight to you via the Edenderry App!

### THE EDENDERRY ECHO

Welcome to the new Edenderry Echo Newsletter, our new digital newsletter delivered straight to your phone or tablet! Going forward, we aim to publish a half-termly online version of the Echo, via the app, to share some important Edenderry news and reminders with the school community. We hope you find it interesting and informative. Being able to share this via the app means we can embed links to simplify things for parents/carers and incorporate high-quality digital images to emphasise how talented our children are. We hope you enjoy it.

### SHARED EDUCATION VISITS

This term, our P5, P6 and P7 classes have been working alongside our friends in St. John's Primary School focusing on various aspects of the school curriculum to develop our longstanding friendship and understanding of each other. This programme brings us in some much-needed finance, ultimately meaning we can deliver additional experiences at less of a cost to parents. The children have really enjoyed their class visits to St. John's and their return visits to us and some friendships have already been established. A huge thank you to the staff for planning and overseeing this work and to huge well done to all of the boys and girls who have been excellent Edenderry ambassadors. Please keep an eye for notifications on the school app regarding any other visits planned for your child's class.

### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Due to the earlier finishing times for parent teacher meetings, part two of our Spring Term extra-curricular activities will now start on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February. The P6 STEM, P4 Junior Engineers, P7 Art and P5 Drama places were already confirmed. Bookings for P4/P5 sports of Mondays and Fridays must again be done via the link below. Please remember that due to the earlier finishing times on 20<sup>th</sup> February, there will only be 4 weeks for the boys.

[Click here to request a place for P4/P5 boys or girls football with Sports City.](#)

If you haven't already done so, you can [click here to request a place for P6/P7 girls football.](#)

If you haven't already done so, you [click here to request a place for P6/P7 boys football.](#)

These links are also still available on the school website.

### NEW SCHOOL APP

We are delighted with the feedback from parents since the launch of the new school app. People have really appreciated the increase in information and the fact they are no longer having to search through schoolbags to find letters and messages that children have forgotten about. A huge thank you to everyone for also embracing our new online payments process for school meals. Please remember the following:

- If you paid for a meal which was not eaten due to absence, please consider that meal automatically included in the following week's booking. You should simply book and pay for whatever other days are required. The teacher will add the 'carried forward' meal manually.
- Please book all meals, for the entire week, before 12 midnight on Sunday. We are no longer able to process cash payments.
- Please remember that if your child is entitled to free school meals, you still need to book those meals on the app. This is the only way that the office and kitchen staff know how many we are catering for.
- Please ensure you are booking a child's meal and not a staff meal. The staff meals are considerably more expensive.

We know this process works as it has been running perfectly for some time in hundreds of other schools. Please contact the office if you have any queries or require support with any aspect of your payment for school meals.

This photograph shows some of the beautiful clay flowers produced during Mrs Kinkaid's and Miss Gordon's first block of art club sessions. The P7 children designed, formed and then painted these and we think they should be very proud of their end products!



## MANAGING CHILDREN'S GAME TIME

Tomorrow is Safer Internet Day and it is a perfect time for us to underline a growing concern that we have in school. As with all schools, we have numerous children who spend a considerable amount of time gaming. 'Gaming' means playing electronic or video games on devices such as Xboxes, smartphones or computers.

For lots of children and young people, gaming is a fun and sociable activity, but recently, we have become concerned about an increasing number of our children's feelings or behaviour around gaming. We are particularly concerned about the amount of time they spend gaming and the type of games they are playing.

When used with healthy boundaries, gaming can be a positive experience, but for a minority of young people, gaming can start to negatively affect their mental wellbeing if it becomes too much. When this happens, a young person might feel less in control of what they're doing. For example, they might start to regularly game in a way that stops them from doing other important things. These include spending time with family and friends in real life, sleeping, eating well, exercising and doing schoolwork.

We are also concerned that a significant number of our children are playing age-restricted games that are way above their level of comprehension. This is dangerous. It does not just introduce them to inappropriate language and concepts. Their inability to comprehend what is happening, can have a seriously detrimental impact on their mental and emotional health and their behaviour.

The links below provide some really useful information about gaming and mental health and include tips to help you talk to your child about gaming, and advice to support you in setting healthy limits.

[Children's Mental Health Gaming Guide](#)

[NSPCC - Keeping Children Safe Online](#)

PEGI (see the link below) also helps parents to make informed decisions when buying video games, PEGI provides age classifications for video games in 38 European countries. The age rating confirms that the game content is appropriate for players of certain age. PEGI considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty.

<https://pegi.info/>

We will be discussing safe and sensible use of the internet with all of the children in assembly tomorrow. Please continue to have these conversations at home with your children and please do not just assume that playing online games or accessing social media platforms with an unsuitable rating, only introduces them to bad words; it does so much more damage than that.



### Young people would like parents to:

- start by finding out what their experience is, rather than assuming gaming is 'bad'
- ask them what they enjoy about gaming and what they get out of it, and show interest in what they have to say
- recognise that gaming is a social thing they do with their friends
- think about ways to make gaming more sociable if they are worried because their child spends lots of time gaming alone
- try to find out what else is going on that might be causing them to game so much, rather than assuming gaming is the problem
- look for a compromise



### Young people don't like it when parents:

- do not recognise the ways in which gaming is helping, and instead approach the conversation as if gaming is 'bad'
- minimise or dismiss the fact that gaming is important to them
- focus on the fact that the time spent gaming could be spent on schoolwork, rather than also thinking about other interests they might enjoy
- ban gaming instead of looking for a compromise, without recognising that this can cut them off from their friends



Safer  
Internet  
Day

# Join the PTA!



## SCHOOL VISION AND ETHOS SURVEY

Mr Blevins has now collated and evaluated all responses to the vision and ethos surveys that were completed by teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and Governors just before Christmas. With the help of Mr McClean's, we have also collated all of the information presented by our School Council. You can already view some of the children's views in their meeting minutes which are available on the school website. The outcome of this detailed evaluation is the drafting of a new and genuinely shared Edenderry Primary School vision statement which highlights our agreed priorities both in the short and long term. The staff and Governors will discuss this over the next few weeks and then we will forward the detailed document to all parents on the school app later this month.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

We have a packed schedule over the next number of weeks. Here are some of the key dates for your diary. Any agreed PTA plans will be added to this in the weeks ahead.

<b>2 Feb</b>	P7 residential payment due
<b>6 Feb</b>	Safer Internet Day
<b>9 Feb</b>	5-a-side football tournament
<b>14 – 17 Feb</b>	Half-term holidays
<b>19 – 21 Feb</b>	Parent meetings (early finish)
<b>20 Feb</b>	PTA meeting
<b>22 Feb</b>	Extra-curricular activities changeover
<b>1 Mar</b>	P7 residential payment due
<b>1 Mar</b>	P6/P7 Tag Rugby Blitz
<b>4 Mar</b>	Local author (Lynda Haffey) visit to P4
<b>7 Mar</b>	World Book Day
<b>9 Mar</b>	P7 Shared Education Visit
<b>20 – 22 Mar</b>	P6 Residential to Castlewellan
<b>28 Mar – 10 Apr</b>	Easter Holidays
<b>10 April</b>	Staff training day
<b>11 Apr</b>	School re-opens for summer term
<b>11 Apr</b>	P7 Residential payment due
<b>26 Apr – 1 May</b>	School Book Fair Visit
<b>7 – 9 May</b>	P7 Residential to Dublin

## PARENT AND TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

For many years Edenderry Primary School benefitted greatly from the interest and support of a hardworking Parent and Teacher Association (PTA). Unfortunately, during the COVID pandemic, the PTA were unable to meet and although a new committee was elected some time ago, in recent years the PTA has been unable to play an active role in the life of the school.

Following the recent survey of parents, Mr Blevins met with Mrs Natasha Overend, the last PTA Chairperson elected, to discuss the re-establishment of the Edenderry PTA. At that meeting it was agreed that we should hold a 'Review and Refresh' meeting in the school assembly hall at 7pm on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February, to kickstart this important aspect of Edenderry school life. At this meeting we will provide an overview of the role and responsibilities of the PTA in 2024, oversee the election or re-election of a small committee and draw up a list of volunteers who are interested in supporting the work of the PTA.

Schools today need the support of families and the community, and we strongly believe that a re-energised PTA can really help Edenderry on a new and progressive journey. In harnessing the power of a PTA, we believe we can:

- increase family engagement;
- increase opportunities for the children to have fun;
- implement programmes to engage families in children's success or school improvements;
- qualify for grants and awards to support the school;
- communicate with families more effectively;
- partner with other community organisations; and
- enhance fundraising efforts.

If you are interested and willing to either sit on a committee or just to volunteer as and when needed, please complete the 'PTA Expression of Interest Form' on the Documents/Forms section of the app and then come along at 7pm on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February to meet some other parents and hear more. This is your opportunity to support the school and to help us deliver the best opportunities for your children. Don't hold back, your interest and support would be greatly appreciated.

## MONTHLY THEME - PERSEVERANCE

Each month now we are focusing on a new whole school theme. Last month we focused on 'kindness' and at the end of the month, Peter (SLSC), Jacob (P6) and Alexander (P5) were awarded headteacher prizes for their very personal and unique acts of kindness. This month we are focusing on 'Perseverance'. Many children have really struggled with resilience and perseverance since COVID so we hope that focusing on this can really help all children to overcome their daily challenges.