



Scoil Naomh Chaitríona

Newsletter - October

College Street,
Ballyshannon,
Co. Donegal
Tel : 071 98 51062

Email: officescoilchaitriona@gmail.com

Dear Parents

It is hard to believe we are back to school now six weeks. It is a huge relief that we have made the return safely and that all our children have settled well into the new routines. This has been made possible by everyone in our community playing their part. As the number of confirmed cases in Donegal rises it is important that we continue our good habits and not become complacent. We want to stay open and that will only be possible if we work together. Thank you for the part you have played so far.

We have had a busy month in Scoil Chaitríona with lots of fun in and out of the classroom, with new arrivals and emotional goodbyes. Please read on to learn more.

Our Heartfelt Thanks and Goodluck to Mrs. Scott



With heavy hearts we bid farewell to our dear friend Breege this week. Monday the 5th October was officially her first day of retired life. The school and staff room haven't been the same since our return to school and we were delighted to have the opportunity to call after school to meet Breege for a quick catch up and to wish her well. We had a lovely evening in her garden with some tea and cake and look forward to a grander celebration when circumstances allow. Breege was a great leader in our school and will be sorely missed by all. I have attached a short tribute to Breege at the end of this newsletter.

A Special Welcome to Mr. Bracken

Scoil Chaitríona would like to extend the warmest of welcomes to Emmet Bracken, the newest member of our teaching staff. Mr. Bracken is a native of Tullamore, Offaly and currently resides in Ramelton. He has many years of teaching experience having taught in Offaly, Abu Dhabi and Dublin. He is a hardworking and enthusiastic addition to our teaching team who has already endeared himself to many of our pupils. We wish him many years of happiness and success here in Scoil Chaitríona.



News and Upcoming Events

GOAL Jersey Day

This Friday the 9th October we are holding a fundraiser to raise money for vulnerable communities around the world. We ask that each child brings in €2 and they may wear their favourite jersey or t shirt. We ask that each child wears their school PE tracksuit bottoms also.

Maths Week

Next week (Monday 12th) is Maths Week. We will be having a lot of fun events such as Maths Games, Competitions, Outdoor Trails and online activities.

Mid Term Break & Halloween Dress up

We break up for Mid Term on the 23rd of October and return to school on Monday 2nd November. We are hoping that we can still have our traditional fancy dress on the Friday. Children may wear costumes but in light of COVID we ask that you take a sensible approach and limit any props or “extras” coming in – Broomsticks, swords, etc

Code of Behaviour

We are currently reviewing our Code of Behaviour and we will be sharing a draft with you by email soon for your input and suggestion. We are planning on introducing a new card system which will be explained also. As always our main focus is rewarding and promoting good behavior within the school which we will be emphasizing now more than ever.

Homework

Some classes have began sending homework home again this month. The junior room will begin next week. This homework should stay at home and only be returned at the end of the week. We feel homework is a vital tool for reinforcing learning and helping children revise work covered in school that day.

COVID-19

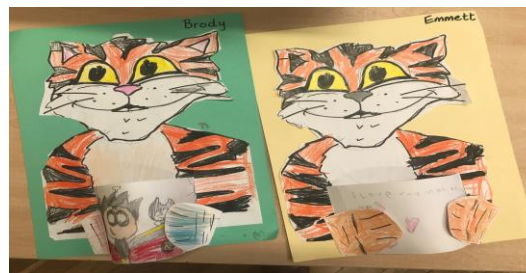
Just a few reminders regarding our COVID restrictions:

- Please ensure your child does not bring any toys, lego, key rings into school from home.
- You can email the school a note for any absences at officescoilchaitriona@gmail.com or you can put a note in your child’s homework diary. Teachers will wait 72 hours before taking out the note.
- When homework folders go home on the Monday it would be wise to wipe them down. Please do the same before returning.
- As the weather gets colder please ensure your child has a coat as we will be keeping the school well ventilated and getting outside as much as possible.
- If your child is presenting with symptoms, please take the sensible approach and contact your GP. A big thank you to those parents who have done so and have helped keep our school safe!

News from the Classrooms

Mr. Carr's Room (Infants and First Class)

My class have been working hard this past six weeks. Our new junior infants have settled well and are eager to learn. We have been focusing on pre writing skills and cutting activities to build fine motor skills. We play counting games and practice our sorting skills in Maths. Our Senior Infants and First Class have picked up where they left off and have been revising their phonics and tricky words in English. We are now beginning addition in our Maths. We have been looking at *An Fómhar* (Autumn) *Na Dáthanna* (Colours) and *Mé Féin* (Myself) in Irish. Our classroom is full of budding artists and they created some lovely artwork inspired by 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' Story.



Ms O'Reilly's Room (Second – Fourth Class)

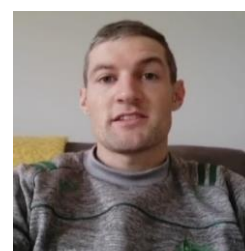
Ms O' Reilly's class have had Eastern vibes this past fortnight as they took an in depth look at India. The class was a hive of activity as they researched the Asian country and produced some beautiful artwork. The middle room have been great at keeping fit and on top of their P.E. twice a week have been doing laps of the school as part of our Run a K a Day. This week was WainFest and Ms O' Reilly's room have participated in several events including Magic Shows and Story Time with famous authors. To top off all the fun Ms O' Reilly rewarded her room for all their hard work and good behaviour with hot chocolates and marshmallows last Friday!



Mr. Kelly's Room

Mr. Kelly's room have been working diligently upon their return. Two weeks ago they carried out scientific experiments to prove O₂ was needed to keep a flame alight and also investigated the effect CO₂ had on a flame. The Senior Room will also be tuning into WainFest this week engaging in online events such as Manny Man (History) and Poetry with Author Paul Cookson. With the Allingham Arts Festival approaching Mr. Kelly's class are working hard on their entries.

Just today Mr Kelly's class participated in an interesting Questions and Answers with Johnny Gethins from the victorious Aodh Ruadh football team. Huge Congratulations to the lads on a fantastic Championship!



Farewell Mrs Scott

A short tribute to our former colleague



Today in Scoil Chaitríona we bid farewell to our dear colleague and friend Mrs. Scott. Having served our school for over 20 years, this day will undoubtedly be an emotional one for Breege, for her family but also for the pupils, parents and her colleagues in Scoil Chaitríona.

Words could not possibly capture the passion and loyalty that Breege holds towards our school. Scoil Chaitríona has always been very much part of Breege's DNA. She attended Scoil Chaitríona herself as a girl and then saw her daughter Mary Flora pass through the school also.

Breege began teaching in Scoil Chaitríona in 1997, leaving her post in Buncrana and moving back home to her beloved Ballyshannon. For many years she served the school diligently and in 2014 she proudly took on the role of principal. Six years later we now wish Breege a reluctant but heartfelt goodbye and we celebrate the legacy she leaves behind.

Breege very much believes that a school community should be like a family, a philosophy that guided her work and leadership and allowed her to create a warm and friendly atmosphere in Scoil Chaitríona.

She knows and appreciates the important role a parent plays in a child's life and endeavoured to make parents feel welcome. From the construction of the Parents Room, to the regular events such as Family Fun Day, Sixth Class Graduation, Grandparent's Day or the Christmas Plays in our hall - the doors were always open for parents to witness and share in the successes of their children.

Our pupils in Scoil Chaitríona all have fond memories of Breege as teacher and principal. The welfare and happiness of the children were always her priority and she was sorely missed by all on the return to school this August. Returning to school in these uncertain times was all the more difficult without Breege's caring presence to offer reassurance.

Many children fondly recall how over the years Breege surprised them with a reward for their hard work or good behaviour. Others recount of how Breege helped them through difficult moments by taking them aside and talking things out over a cup of tea or juice. No matter how busy the schedule Breege always made time for those who needed her.

Breege has regularly been in our thoughts this month as we as a staff come to terms with her retirement. We look back affectionately on our social outings be it staff members weddings or end of term drinks. You could always rely on Breege for a bit of craic.

We also acknowledge how Breege has steered the school through times of great change. She made great strides in improving the teaching and learning within the school and she spent her six years as principal guiding and inspiring her team. She encouraged her staff to develop themselves professionally, allowing us to attend courses and training days so we could grow and improve as teachers. She regularly invested in resources to improve literacy and numeracy and was always ambitious in trying out new ideas and each classroom was kitted out with new interactive whiteboards.

Breege's love for music and sport was particularly evident. Breege encouraged our pupil's to try out different sports and always try their best. She actively promoted the local Athletics and GAA clubs and regularly invited coaches in from various sporting backgrounds to train our pupils.

Scoil Chaitríona has become renowned for their excellent choir under the guidance of Breege who was ever present at First Communion, Confirmations, school masses and Christmas carol services. Breege felt strongly that this long standing tradition within the school would survive and flourish.

On a personal note I would like to thank Breege wholeheartedly for the warm welcome she gave me when I first joined the Scoil Chaitríona family in 2014. I instantly felt at home and knew this school would be a place where I could grow and improve.

Breege took me under her wing and always willingly offered her time and counsel. She shared her experiences of leadership with me and allowed me to develop leadership skills of my own. I feel it would be a difficult task to replicate the success and achievements experienced by Breege in Scoil Chaitríona but I take great comfort in knowing that she will only be a phone call away and always happy to offer guidance and advice.

Such is the strength of the foundation lain by Breege throughout her 22 years in Scoil Chaitríona that I feel it's safe to say we can look to the future with confidence and optimism.

Congratulations on your retirement Breege and I wish you many well deserved years of health and happiness foy you and your family.