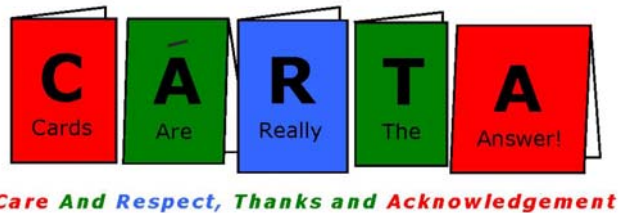


The *Cárta* Scheme



What is *Cárta*?

Cárta is a cooperative venture between *Ballinora Parish Council*, the *Staff of Ballinora National School* and the *Parents' Association of Ballinora NS*.

It is a voluntary scheme, aimed at reducing the financial burden on parents and others on certain occasions, while re-establishing the ethos and values traditionally associated with them.

It arose from a widespread view that many people feel under an obligation to participate in excessive expenditure in three areas, and the three groups above wish to suggest alternatives, under the umbrella of the *Cárta* Scheme:

- ***Ballinora NS Parents' Association*** has received many representations from parents who feel that birthday parties can present a repeated and unwarranted strain from the point of view of present-buying, and are happy to support the *Cárta* scheme as an alternative.
- ***The Staff of Ballinora NS***, while fully realising that many parents give presents to teachers at Christmas or at the year's end as an expression of thanks, would like to move towards the *Cárta* model as a preferred and much appreciated gesture for those who wish to do so.
- ***Ballinora Parish Council*** and, indeed, many parents and teachers feel that the long-standing practice of giving "Communion Money" or "Confirmation Money", while understandable as a modest token, has in recent years become grossly distorted. In addition to placing a severe financial burden on parents, it has the unfortunate effect of demeaning and belittling what should be the central focus and source of joy on those respective days: the receiving of the Sacraments themselves. Consequently, it is proposed that Ballinora would take a lead in this area and encourage parents and relations to adopt the *Cárta* scheme for these occasions.

It is stressed that *Cárta* is entirely voluntary, and the groups above have neither the wish nor the authority to compel anybody to participate. However, the recent economic difficulties have highlighted the extent to which many feel they are caught in an ever-increasing spiral of materialism, which, in addition to adding to financial burdens, also undermines the traditional values and sentiments associated with the occasions above, and many others.

These economic difficulties, however, also present us with an opportunity to break this circle and re-emphasise those values of lasting worth which will serve us all – and particularly our young people – into the future.

The principles of *Cárta*, together with suggestions as to how it may be used in different situations, are set out in the attached documents.

Thanks to the Principal and Staff of Ballinora NS for kindly hosting the *Cárta* documents on the school's website at www.ballinorans.ie