November NEWSLETTER

Dear St. Cronan's Junior School families,,
As we settle into November, the recent cold snap has certainly made its presence felt. It's a timely reminder to ensure that all winter coats and accessories—hats, gloves, scarves, and ear muffs—are clearly labelled with your child's name so they can be easily reunited with their owners.

I have had such a wonderful month in St. Cronan's as we continue our *Classroom Compass* project. This initiative has given me the joy of visiting each class and taking part in a lesson, and it has truly been a highlight of my role. Over the past few weeks, I've enjoyed cosy story times, exciting science experiments, enthusiastic news writing, and practising the formation of the letter *a* with our Junior Infants. I'm very much looking forward to spending time with our 1st and 2nd classes next week.

During every visit, I've been so impressed by the skills our children demonstrate. They are active participants in their learning—questioning, predicting, collaborating, communicating, listening, and recording. Witnessing their wonder and joy has been a privilege. A heartfelt thank-you to all the classes and teachers who have welcomed me so warmly into their learning spaces. You are the living example of our school motto: *To Be the Best That We Can Be.*

I feel truly honoured to work with every child, every staff member, and every parent and guardian in our school community. In a world that can often feel busy or challenging, our little community is a source of strength and warmth.

We are beginning to see the first signs of Christmas preparations, with festive songs and rhymes drifting from classrooms and beautiful artwork appearing on the walls. Dave and I are especially excited to decorate the school for *Operation Christmas* and, of course, to revisit our cherished tradition of gathering as a community and sharing **Dasher** by Matt Tavares as our first Christmas story of the season.
Stay warm and cosy.
Warmest wishes,
Edel Blake

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Enrolment for Junior Infants September 2026

A gentle reminder to all our families that enrolment for Junior Infants September 2026 are now open. We have had over 160 applications so far – it is important that all siblings, cousins, neighbours and friends enroll before the closing date in January. If you have any questions about enrolment, you can ask Edubot on our website or contact the office on info@stcronansjns.ie

School Hall Floor

As our school building gets older, we need to work hard to take care of it and keep it as modern as we can. In recent years we have upgraded the Fire Alarm and Emergency lighting System, the electrical system, the heating boiler and currently the water pump. One area that we are keen to upgrade is our beloved school hall.

We share our hall with our lovely neighbours in the Senior School. The hall is where we learn all our foundation movement skills, a love of sport, a love for drama, a love for dancing and for gathering together.

All this use has meant that the hall floor needs to be freshened up. We have been quoted 34,000 euro for this big job. Unfortunately, there are no grants from the Department of Education and Youth for this. We never give up in St. Cronan's Junior School. We have received 6,000 euro in funding from the Irish American Partnership and 17,000 from the daa. This leaves us with 11000 to fundraise for. We will be collecting donations at the door on the day of our Christmas show to help us reach our target so we can make our lovely hall beautiful again. If any parents/guardians in the school have any connections with companies that supply and fit marmoleum flooring please reach out and let us know. All support is greatly received!

If anyone is feeling lucky you can sign up to our weekly school lotto here: https://www.ourfundraiser.ie/org/stcronansjns There is a weekly winner of 20 euro and a large bar of yummy chocolate, and the jackpot is 975 euro.

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Attendance Explained

Some Parents/Guardians have contacted us recently concerned and a little confused about attendance. School attendance and punctuality is correlated with better learning outcomes and a stronger sense of community and happiness for children in school. There will always be situations where a child has to stay home, due to illness and other unavoidable situations. **It's important to note that where a child has been vomiting or has diarrhoea, the HSE guidelines are they should be kept home until 48 hours after the last episode.** Outside of this, wherever possible pupils should be in school each day.

School starts at 9am each day. Attendance is recorded daily by the class teacher on our online roll books via Aladdin. If the child arrives after roll call, the time of arrival is also recorded here (this is calculated by Aladdin into learning time missed at the end of the year).

The Legal Requirements

There are two mandated reporting mechanisms for attendance where attendance is reported to TUSLA, the child and family agency.

School Attendance Reports

There are two reporting periods in the year, September to December and January to June. We submit the school attendance returns in January for September to December and again in June. On this form we are required to list any pupils, over the age of 6, who have missed 20 school days for any reason. You will be informed if your child is included in the report. These figures are used for statistical purposes only.

The reports are not something to be concerned about in themselves,. While attendance is hugely important there are also very valid reasons for children to miss school and this is understood. Where the school has concerns about your child's attendance, we will be in touch to discuss with you separate to this. Please be mindful that missed days do add up quickly, and 20 days in a year is a month of learning time the child has lost, so it is important to minimise absences that are within a families control.

Discretionary Referrals

Discretionary referrals are made where a school is worried about the attendance of a pupil. This might be due to a lot of unexplained absences, a pattern of absence, significant ongoing issues with punctuality leading to a lot of missed learning time etc. A school will refer a child to the Education Welfare Officer where they have these concerns. The role of the Education Welfare Officer is primarily to offer support to families to improve attendance.

The school will always contact parents before referring to the Education Welfare Officer and support where possible.

Key things to note

- The aim of attendance and punctuality procedures are to ensure the child gets the best experience of education and maximises learning time. We are available to support as needed.
- There is no need for concern if you get a letter saying your child has been included on the attendance report. Explained absences are recorded as such.
- Be sure to enter your absence reason on Aladdin each time your child is absent, to keep that on record.
- Aim to have your child in school for 9:00am each day. We understand this isn't always possible, and understanding is always there for extenuating circumstances.

The Tusla Education Support Service have more information for parents/guardians on their page here.

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Water Bottle Reminder

Unfortunately, the water in the sinks in our classrooms is not drinking water – it comes from the tank. There is only 1 source of drinking water in the school – the staffroom. If children finish their drinking water during the school day it is not always possible to refill water bottles. With this in mind if your child is regularly coming home with an empty water bottle it may be a good idea to provide them with a 2nd water bottle or perhaps a larger bottle. Thank you for your Understanding.

Parking

Please help us to keep our school safe each morning. No parents/guardians should be parking in the car park.
Please help keep our neighbours happy by parking mindfully and not blocking their driveways.
A big thank you to all our parents who do keep these rules – I really appreciate your co-operation.

Kids Take Over – Room 15

'In Room 15 we are learning about Staying Safe Online. Don't talk to strangers. Don't add people you don't know. Don't give out personal details. Block people, remove them as a friend. Don't push the button to download any games'. By Lily, Room 15.

'In First Class we are learning about Staying Safe Online. Don't talk to strangers. Block people or remove them as a friend. Don't give out any personal details. Ask an adult if you are allowed to download a new game. Don't add people you don't know and tell an adult if someone you don't know tries to add you'. By Saoirse, Room 15.

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Internet Safety

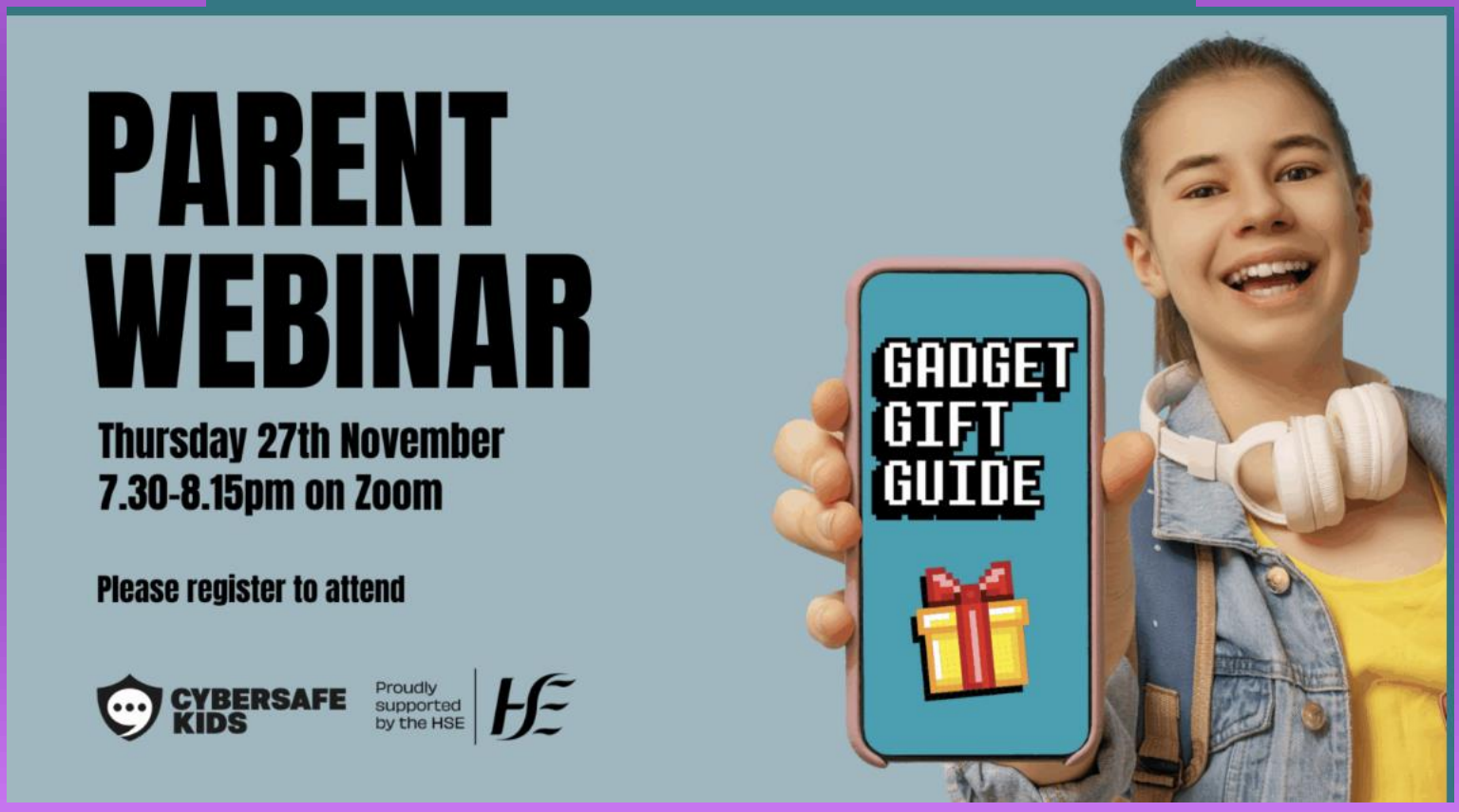
I recently had a lovely parent contact me to outline how simple it is for a 6-year-old to by-pass security features on a tablet and access Snap Chat. Apps such as Snap Chat, roblocks and others allow strangers to communicate with our precious children. Please have a chat with your child about internet safety and monitor their use of any device that has internet access. Research (*Left to their own Devices* by Cyber Safe Kids) has shown that 55% of 8–12-year olds wouldn't tell parents if they saw upsetting content on their device as they fear the device would be taken from them. Our children are too precious to put at risk.

No devices should be left in bedrooms overnight. We do learn about Internet Safety in school, but it needs to be a regular conversation at home also. Cybersafe Kids have a fantastic gift guide for devices and a free upcoming webinar – you can register here: https://www.cybersafekids.ie/giftguide/#register

'Gadget Gift Guide' Webinar

Join Ann Harte and Olwyn Beresford, two of our most experienced CyberSafeKids trainers, for this parent and carer-focused webinar about making the right present choices this Christmas! If you're thinking of gifting any kind of smart device this year – a phone, tablet, gaming console, wearable or smart toy – this webinar walks you through our new **Gadget Gift Guide**, providing lots of tips and practical advice to buying the right present and keeping your children safer online this holiday season.

Please click on the button below to register for Zoom.



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Kids Takeover – Room 15

'We went to a Christmas Doodle, we made Christmas drawings. We were partnered with a Junior Infant. We had to bring a whiteboard and a marker. We drew candy canes. I had a good time with my partner'. By Cian, Room 15

'I went to a Christmas Doodle in the PE Hall. I had a partner in Junior Infants. I used oil pastels to draw and colour Christmas pictures'. By James, Room 15

2nd Class Buddies

In many school's 2nd Class children are too young for important jobs. Not in St. Cronan's Junior School. They are the oldest children in the school and the best helpers with fantastic opinion and ideas. This year our wonderful 2nd class children (and even some 1st class children) have become buddies to our new Junior Infants. They have done some lovely activities together including our fantastic Christmas Doodle.

Next week in an official ceremony – our 2nd Class children will be receiving their official 2nd Class buddy badge – they can wear it proudly with their uniform so they can show the world how kind and wonderful they are.

Well done 2nd Class. We are so proud of you.

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Parental/Guardian Complaints Procedure

As a school community we value good relationships with all our families. There is an agreed procedure between the National Parent's Council and the INTO. It has been adopted by the Board of Management for all staff. Below is the procedure. Please remember we all have the best interest of the children as our moral purpose and value your role as your child's Primary Educator.

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
  - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
  - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
  - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1
Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal[1]

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2
Written *(10 days)*

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/ legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/ legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/ parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Formal Stage 3
Board of Management *(20 days)*

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/ legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:

a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;

b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board;

c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular,

or;

d) where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.

b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/ legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.

c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.

d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.

e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4
Decision *(5 days)*

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Future Dates

We know it is hard to keep up with all the events are busy little children have. Here are all the events we currently have planned. Please screen shot this and share in What's App groups and with friends. Please note that plans could be subject to change – we will always give as much notice as possible.

Date	Event	Time
Friday 28th November	Parent's Association Jumper Adoption: School Hall	1:40 & 2:40
Thursday 4th December	2nd Class Trip to The Snow Queen Panto in The Helix	
Monday 8th December	Choir to sing in library	
Sunday 14th December	Parent's Association – Christmas Bingo	
Tuesday 16th December	Annual Christmas Show in hall – no tickets: donation at the door	9:30 – Junior Infants 10:30 – Senior Infants 11:30 – 1st Class 12:30 – 2nd Class
Wednesday 17th December	Choir to sing in Dublin Airport	
Friday 19th December	½ day for Holidays	11:45 – Junior & Senior Infants home 11:55 – 1st & 2nd Class home
Friday 9th January	Enrolment for Junior Infants 2026 closes	
Thursday 29th January	Grandparent's Day – Please note not all classes participate – invitation comes via Aladdin from Class Teacher	Junior & Senior Infants: 1PM 1st & 2nd Class: 2PM
Wednesday 4th & Thursday 5th February	Parent Techer Meetings – Teacher will make appointment times available via Aladdin in January.	1st & 2nd Class will go home at 2:20 PM

Date	Event	Time
4th March	World Book Day – Fireside Read with teddy for Junior & Senior Infants	Evening Time – invitations will be issued
18th March	Annual Spring Fair & Spring Hat Competition	2PM – 4: 30 PM
27th March	½ Day for holidays	11:45 – Junior & Senior Infants home 11:55 – 1st & 2nd Class home
23rd May	Communion Day –	
Thursday 28th May	2nd Class Photos	
Monday 29th June	2nd Class Graduations	9:30: Room 2A & 3A 11:00: Room 19 & 20