

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This has been a very interesting and challenging term for St Killian's pupils, their families and the staff. Despite the difficult circumstances the pupils have settled back well into school and have done an excellent job of following COVID 19 safety guidelines.

I would also like to thank the staff and all the parents/guardians for their continued efforts to ensure the high safety standards we have in place to minimise COVID 19 risks.

Over the next few weeks as the state gets to grips with the rising level of cases and the risks that these pose, please be assured that we will continue to do our best to ensure that all pupils get the best educational experience they can in these very changing circumstances.

I would ask all parents to work with the school to ensure that we are able to link all children into the google classroom platform just in case classes need to be closed on HSE advice if we get a positive COVID case.

The Department have announced additional supports for schools to deal with COVID cases as they arise in a timely manner. This support is vital for all schools and is essential in enabling the BOM/School Management to ensure the school is as safe as possible for all pupils and staff and their families.

During the colder weather the heating will be on as usual but due to the need to ventilate the rooms frequently the classes will be colder and I would advise parents whose children feel the cold to ensure that they have enough layers on to keep warm in these circumstances.

Staff

I would like to welcome Melanie Kiely to St Killian's, and has replaced Mr Johnston in Hazel. We have two new school dogs in training, these are Bonnie and Rosie. They will take up their role in a job-share position as they are still very young. The pupils have already got to know the two puppies and I would like to personally thank the children who have assistance dogs, who are helping me with their training. I have learned lots and so have the puppies! We look forward to continuing our learning journey together in school.

School Training

The staff are participating in whole school training aimed at supporting positive behaviour management interventions. This has been on-going and will continue this term.

All staff completed a range of COVID 19 compliance training and are continually working to ensure that the school environment is as safe as it can be for everyone in our school community.

Creative Schools

The Creative Schools Programme funded by the Arts Council continues this year, this provides funding for art activities chosen by the children and organised by the Pupil Creative Schools Pupil Committee. Ms Coughlan will be working with the pupils next half-term to organise some COVID 19 compliant Creative Schools Activities.

Leah from Music Mash-up will resume ukulele classes, this year with Ash and Willow Classes.

We're also very excited to announce that all classes will get to watch the Panto, Cinderella Live, on the big screen in the classroom on the 16th December. Who knows, we may have popcorn to celebrate the occasion!

Fundraising

The PA are planning a series of small school fund-raising activities over the rest of this term and will be in contact with parents as they plan these events. Please be assured that any fund-raising events will be COVID compliant. Funds will be spent on the purchase of additional equipment for the pupils.

As we are no longer able to share certain equipment between classes the costs of providing certain items is very high this year.

Pupil Well-Being

There has been a great improvement on the safety of pupils during bus drop off and collection times. The staggered COVID response plan has enabled pupils to come straight into school at their allocated time and staff have noted the huge reduction in stress and anxiety previously displayed by many of our pupils, this was caused by the waiting in the bus to come into school. Pupils are more relaxed and learning ready as a result of this new system.

We have made the most of the Autumn weather by going on long nature walks and some classes are busy planting a flower garden. Rumour has it there will be a wildflower section, which will make the bees and other insects very happy.

The ice-cream van has also visited a couple of times, which was a huge treat.

Leavers

For pupils in 6th Class we advise parents to ensure that they apply for a Secondary School Place for their child in good time. I will be meeting with NCSE/NEPS/OT/SLT to plan for transition and any support that can be put in place for this. Many of the Secondary Schools have 'online' Open Evenings completed and available on their school website and I would advise parents to look at these and to ensure that the applications for a place are in on time.

Confirmation

We have no details as yet as to how the Confirmation will proceed. We hope to enable pupils in 5th and 6th to complete their Confirmation this year. Once we have any information we will be in contact with parents on this matter.

Mr Johnston

It is with great regret that we say goodbye to Mr Johnston after many years of working in our school. Mr Johnston has worked tirelessly with our pupils for 20 years. His unique sense of humour and individual narration style has proved popular with pupils throughout his time with us. His commitment to the education of some of our more complex pupils is immense and his understanding of the individual needs of our pupils is greatly valued.

He and Realtín have proved an unbeatable combination over the last few years, and in particular during the lockdown when Realtín and her blog went global! He will be missed by staff and pupils alike, and we wish him the very best of luck in his retirement.

School Transport

Please note that any issues/difficulties arising on school transport should be brought to the attention of the bus escort in the first place and then to the class teacher/Principal as necessary.

Please note that if mobiles/mobile devices/ipads are permitted on the bus route, all devices must remain in your child's school bag during the day. These items should not be accessed by any child during the day. Not all contractors allow devices on the run.

In the event of a Red Warning-School Transport will not run.

In the event of an Orange/Yellow warning, individual contractors will assess the Health and Safety risks of the run and may choose not to run. If you can bring your child safely to school please do so, if not please advise the school of the absence through the school website.

Transport may also not run due to COVID restrictions. We will do our best to ensure transport runs as normal but please understand that in some cases it is not possible for the contractor to provide another bus or for us to access a sub-bus escort.

Access to St Killian's School/Parking

Please note that the school office does not have a full time Receptionist and as such there may be times of the day when it is difficult to access the site. Please bear with us and someone will let you in when they can.

Parents and Visitors are asked to park outside the school, ring for access at the side gate and proceed to reception.

Parking in the school site will be reserved for staff and disabled visitors only.

Building Works/School Development

We are very lucky to have this lovely school building and that the Department funded Phase 1 of the build. As many of you know the school is not yet complete and further extensive renovation is required to ensure that facilities for our pupils are easily accessible and fit for purpose. Until such time as Phase 2 is sanctioned we do not have enough properly appointed classrooms/resource rooms/therapy rooms/quiet rooms/sensory spaces/office space etc to admit a full pupil roll.

We are working very hard to get permission and funding for the final phase of the build; the process is under way but as yet we have no approval/funding from the Department to commence the final phase. I would expect as with many public projects this will take time.

First Aid/Medication

For pupils on regular medication, please send in the exact dose into school in a bag with the child's name on it. The information must include a photocopy of the original prescription and dosage instructions. For pupils on regular medication please ensure that morning medication is given at the same time every day, so that if a dose is required in school, we can schedule staff to monitor same.

We have quite a few pupils requiring medication, and this means that timetables must be consistent in order to ensure all staff are available to administer/monitor medication at set times.

In the event of a medical emergency, school will contact the parent/guardian immediately to advise on the situation. Please ensure that school has a second/third contact name and number if we cannot contact the parent.

Please inform the school promptly if medical needs change or develop as school staff need to know if medication is required in an emergency and be trained to administer same.

Where emergency medication needs to be administered please ensure that the care plan if relevant, photocopy of the medication procedure and emergency dose of medication is in school every day.

All medication must be given to the bus escort who will pass it to the class team. No child should carry medication in their bag.