



ST. PIUS X BNS

DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you are all well and looking forward to the Christmas break. Term

One has been a busy one for everyone in our community. We have continued to adapt our school days around restrictions, absences and other Covid-related challenges. I'm happy to say we have been very successful at giving our pupils a normal school term (by and large!) with learning and fun being at the centre of our classroom activities. To this end, we are extremely well-served by our amazing team of class/support teachers and SNAs. I have seen first-hand how my colleagues have worked tirelessly since we reopened to make children feel safe and happy, despite the turmoil of the world beyond the school gates. I'm so fortunate to have the high calibre of professionals in our school and want to acknowledge their significant contribution at the end of a difficult first term. It would also be remiss of me not to thank Karen Reddy, our school secretary, for her stellar job on fielding mountains of emails and phone-calls each and every day (often at weekends and evenings). We would be lost without her and her patience (with me! and others) makes the school run so smoothly.

I'd also like to thank our Board of Management (under the chairpersonship of Ronan McMahon) for its constant support and governance of the school. We are equally appreciative too of Linda Ward and her Parents' Association team for all their help, most recently in getting Santa (with treats!) to visit the school. I'd also like to acknowledge the resilience and kindness of our students. Every day, their energy and enthusiasm coming to school makes our job all the easier. Finally, I'd like to thank you, the parents, for your support. The number of people who ring or mail offering a kind word or assistance at this challenging time does not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

The festive season, as we know, is normally a time for connecting with family and friends. For some in our community, that may be hampered or curtailed this year. We hope that whenever and however you spend your Christmas break, you enjoy it and get an opportunity to relax and recharge for the coming year.

Have a peaceful Christmas and happy New Year,

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Lorcan Coyle

Principal



Gaelic Games

Since Halloween, the boys in 6th class got back on the playing fields training for Gaelic football. 36 boys in the classes trained for 4 weeks in the sun and rain, showing a great attitude and desire to make school teams. Training will resume in the new year with the Cumann na mBunscol leagues due to start in February. We all agree though, it's great to get back training and representing the school.

Since September, the boys in Junior and Senior Infants have been visited by our local GAA games promotion officers, once a week, to develop their fundamental movement skills. Tommy (Faughs) and Kevin (Templeogue Synge Street) have been in, rain, sleet or snow, playing games and introducing the boys to all the fun of physical activity. The boys have greatly enjoyed the sessions and we are already planning on getting to the Croke Park finals in 2030!! Thanks to both clubs for their support.



Tennis

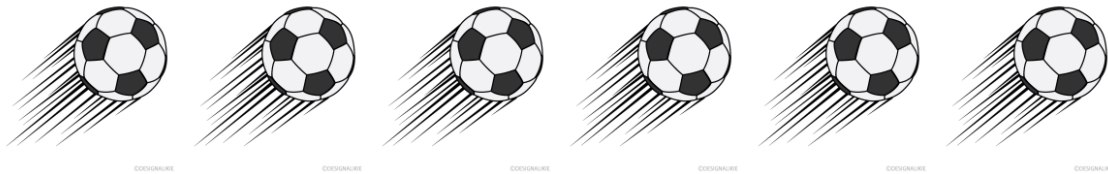
It's been a very busy term for tennis in St. Pius. Our Senior Infants, First Class, Third Class and Sixth classes have all received coaching in Terenure College from our excellent tennis coach, Stephen O'Connor. These lessons were enjoyed hugely by the boys and we've received very positive feedback from both teachers and parents about their progress. Tennis is a fantastic sport which specifically focuses on fundamental movement and various other vital skills that will transfer to other sports and provide a life skill for children as well as great enjoyment. We hope to begin lessons with the remaining classes after Easter and continue the whole-school tennis development which we started in 2018. We hope to enter at least one team into the Leinster Schools Primary Tennis Competition again after Easter for the senior classes if it goes ahead. Boys will need to be a member of a tennis club or academy and know the rules of doubles. We encourage all the boys to join one of the many local tennis clubs to further develop their tennis skills and make new friends.



Morning Soccer League

For the past few weeks, our class, Mr. Smyth's, along with Mr. Curtin's 5th Class, have been competing in a morning soccer league. Our class team names were from the Airtricity League while Mr. Curtin's were from the Spanish La Liga. It was great fun. Each Tuesday and Thursday morning before school there would be 2 matches, one at 08.05 and another at 08.20. The classes were allowed to come in and watch. There were some tough battles in what was a tightly contested league. At the end, the top 2 teams played off in a final. Galway United were the winners of our league. It was great fun and we all really enjoyed it.

Oscar and Eoin 5th Class



Food Dudes

During the first week of December, our school participated in the Food Dudes healthy eating programme. The whole school got involved, tasting different fruits and vegetables each day for that week. It was great to have our Junior and Senior Infant boys involved as it was their first time participating in Food Dudes and they really enjoyed it! The boys got the chance to try so many different foods, from peppers to cucumbers and blueberries and it was so lovely to hear boys talking about new foods that they tried and

discovered that they actually really liked! Eating a healthy, balanced diet is so important for keeping us well, so well done to all boys who tried all the different fruits and vegetables. Keep up the healthy eating!



St Vincent de Paul

A huge thank you and well done to everyone who supported our 2021 SVP Non-Uniform Day. The generosity of our school community is just incredible. Last year, the families of St. Pius X managed to raise over €12,000 for the charity. This year, we are already on track to top that figure - an unbelievable achievement!

All proceeds collected will be put to great use directly helping families close to our school with food and heating costs. Christmas will be a challenging time for so many families and your support is greatly appreciated. Stay safe and have a lovely Christmas.



We are always very proud and not really surprised at the ingenuity of our students. An example of this is the recent philanthropic activities of Cohen (Mr. Curtin's 5th), Ailbe (Ms. Pléamonn's 3rd) and Ruby Mae (Ms. Goss's class). The family decided to set up their own craft-stand outside their house and sold candle centerpieces to raise money for our SVP collection. Not only that, but they managed to raise 100 euro!! Well done guys, we look forward to seeing you all on Dragon's Den in the years to come.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Christmas Holidays: School Closed Wednesday 22nd December at 12 Noon.
Reopens: Thursday 6th January 2022 for full normal school day.

Mid Term Break: Closed Wednesday 23rd, Thursday 24th and Friday 25th February 2022

St Patrick's weekend: Closed Thursday 17th and Friday 18th March 2022

Easter Holidays: Closed Friday 8th April 2022 at 12 Noon
Reopens: Monday 25th April for full school day.

May Bank Holiday: Closed Monday 2nd May.

June Bank Holiday: Closed Monday 6th, Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th June.

Summer Holidays: Closed Thursday 30th June at 12 Noon.



The Crocus Project

Mr. Dillon's class recently took part in The Crocus Project learning all about the Holocaust. The boys planted crocus bulbs in memory of all the children who died. These flowers will bloom at the end of January or beginning of February around the time of International Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January). When these flowers appear in Spring, the pupils of St. Pius will be able to admire them and explain what they represent. These flowers remind us that, even after sad events, new life begins and there is beauty in the world and hope in our future. We are also reminded how important it is to accept and value people from all cultures and ethnicities.



Our School Garden

Autumn just gone was a very busy time for the boys in Third Class this year. They were very fortunate to have been gifted a range of both winter and spring bulbs from a local businessman. Upon the delivery of this wonderful gift, the boys were straight to work. There was no time to spare. The boys were so keen to get started that the classrooms quickly began to look like our local garden centre filled with flower pots, bags of compost and heavy bags of grit. They dug in straight away. It was such fun!

We now wait in eager anticipation to see if their hard work will pay off. We hope to return to a classroom full of glorious amaryllis (which is a symbol of love) after the Christmas holidays. In the following months, we hope to see an abundance of wonderful flowers in full display - tulips, crocuses, hyacinths and daffodils (which translate as "lus an chromchinn" as Gaeilge – the bowing of the head) to name a few!

For now, we wait but trust in the saying "Tús maith, leath na hoibre"! Green fingers crossed.



The Lions Club Art Competition

This year the boys in 5th class participated in the Lions Club Peace Poster competition which was organised by Ms. Maxwell. The theme of the competition was 'Peace' and drawings could not have any writing on them. My picture had many different people holding hands, including a girl in a wheelchair, a blind man, a priest, a small person, a tall person, a girl wearing a hijab as well as people from different countries around the world. I also joined flags together and wrapped them around the Earth to show we should be together in our commitment to peace. I am very happy to have entered this competition and my piece was selected as the winner, which will now go on to represent St. Pius X BNS in the national competition. Our masterpieces are now hanging in the corridors of the school. Luke - 5th Class



Creating Projects from 'Scratch'

The boys in Ms Redmond's 6th class have been working with a programming software called Scratch this term. Scratch educates students on the fundamentals of computer science, programming and coding. The boys completed a 2-week intensive workshop, learning about the basics of coding and then worked to create a project based on Climate Change. Some boys created interactive fact-based stories and others created games or challenges based on saving the world from the effects of climate change. The boys engaged excellently with the project and they worked together to fix any 'bugs' or 'glitches' that they encountered. As their stories and games developed, the boys made their projects more interesting by adding scores, time variables and sound effects, to name but a few. The students then presented these projects, informing us of how they came up with their concept, what problems they ran into and how they overcame them. The other boys then gave feedback on each project and the boys worked to improve their projects even more. The boys thoroughly enjoyed this digital project and the high standard of the projects proved just how engaged and skilled the boys were at immersing themselves into a new initiative such as coding. We hope to continue using Scratch, not only in our class, but as a digital initiative rolled out to other classes in St. Pius as well.



QUIZ!

Whizz Quizzes

The weekly Whizz Quizzes were back up and running this term with Mr Réamonn conjuring up some very tricky and interesting questions. To finish the series, on Wednesday 15th December, as part of our Christmas celebrations in St. Pius X, Mr. Réamonn hosted a special Bumper Christmas Whizz Quiz live on Zoom for the boys from 3rd to 6th Class. It was jam-packed full of Christmas-themed questions and puzzles to get all the boys in the holiday spirit! The questions covered everything from Christmas movies and Christmas carols to festive teasers and puzzling pictures! The boys answered questions in pairs to win some sweet treats. This quiz was great fun for all the boys in the senior classes and added some Christmas cheer to the classrooms! Merry Quiz-mas!

Mr. Réamonn's Mind-Bending Monthly Challenges!

This year Mr. Réamonn will be setting the boys from 3rd to 6th class a Monthly Enrichment Challenge. In November, he set the boys a Mathletes challenge called 'Seven Slices'. The response from the boys was excellent with an amazing 165 entries of which 147 were correct! However, each month there can only be three winners and these boys will be selected at random from the correct entries. The winners of the November challenge were Seán from Mr. Kealy's class, Dylan from Mr. Curtin's class and Matthew from Mr. Geraghty's class. Slice work... I mean nice work, boys!

This month saw the boys being given a Wordsmith Challenge called 'Merry Christmas to Y-O-U'. The boys were provided with a Christmas-themed paragraph in which was hidden the consecutive letters Y, O and U. It was the boys' challenge to circle and count the number of times they could find the hidden word YOU among the letters of the words in the paragraph. The winners selected from the 179 entries this month were Cormac from Ms. Pléamonn's class, Harry from Mr. Dillon's class and Edward from Mr. Faherty's class. Well done to all of Y-O-U who entered!



Christmas Plays

Lights, Camera, Action! It has been all go for the last week in St. Pius X BNS as 11 classes from Junior Infants to 2nd put on their Christmas performances in the GP room. With no live audience this year we moved online. With the help of Mr Garland and Ms Maxwell, who managed the recordings as well as the sound and pictures, we put on a professional schedule of Christmas plays. Parents then got the chance to watch their little stars on YouTube. A great combination of plays was performed with *Ralph the Reindeer*, *The Sleepy Shepherd* and *Christmas with the Aliens* on display, as well as a collection of Christmas carols and poems put on by 2nd Class. We hope that this time next year we will be able to welcome parents back to live shows. Check out our website to see the photographs.





Santa Visit

Covid-19 couldn't keep Santa away from visiting the boys at St. Pius X BNS. Although he couldn't enjoy his usual sing-song with the boys in the GP room, he had a chat from outside the windows of all the classrooms from Junior Infants to 2nd Class. Santa left a little gift of a box of sweets or biscuits for all the boys for being so good this year!! A big "Thank You" to our great PA for organising this and for helping keep Christmas spirits high around St. Pius.

