
Boolavogue National School

Newsletter

September 2020



Welcome back to school!

Meet the Staff

Mrs. Aoife Bennett - is Acting Principal and Special Education Teacher (S.E.T.)

Mrs. Zara Gallagher - is the teacher of Junior Infants (*Thanks to Ms. Mackin who has covered since the school reopened. Ms. Ruth Cowman will cover the end of Ms. Gallagher's maternity leave from 28th September – 16th October*).

Ms. Amy Moloney - is the teacher of Senior Infants, while covering maternity leave for Ms. Avril Mullery.

Ms. Róisín Reville - is the teacher of 1st and 2nd class.

Mrs. Michelle Coleman - is Acting Deputy Principal and teacher of 3rd and 4th class.

Ms. Ann Doyle - is the teacher of 5th and 6th class.

Mrs. Karen Cowman/Ms. Aishling Doyle - Special Education Teachers (Job Share Arrangement).

Sinead Dunne/Emma Doyle (Job Share Arrangement), **Loyola Meireles, Caroline Kavangh & Eilis Concannon** - SNA Team

Sabrina Walsh - school secretary

We extend a very warm welcome to all of our new staff members this September – welcome to the wonderful Boolavogue National School community!

Road Safety At the start of another school year, the Board of Management would like to remind parents of parking and road safety around our school. Please ensure that you do not park on the sloped ends of footpaths or stop outside the school gates to allow your child to exit your car. Also, if you are parking in Sunset Drive, please ensure you do not block any entrances to houses or park on any double yellow lines. We encourage all parents and pupils to use the pedestrian crossing when arriving and leaving the school/parish hall as it is a busy road passing our school.

Upcoming Events

September 27th

First Holy Communion

October 10th – 16th

Maths Week 2020 - See www.mathsweek.ie for more info.

October 23rd

Fancy dress for Halloween (TBC – more details to follow)

Split the Pot draw

Smile for the Camera

School photographs for individuals and family groups of Junior Infant pupils only will be taken on **Monday 28th September at 9.20am** by Image Masters Studio.

Split the Pot

Details regarding Split the Pot will be shared shortly. The draw will take place on 23rd October 2020.

Farewell to the Class of 2020

Our wonderful 19 pupils from the 6th class of 2019/2020 have all spread their wings and have all begun at their secondary schools. They missed out on so much due to the school closure including a well-deserved farewell to their primary school, teachers and peers, and also the annual tree planting ceremony. In light of this, the annual tree planting will now take place on Saturday 3rd October. In order to adhere to current HSE guidelines, only these past pupils and their immediate families are invited to attend. Fr. White will conduct a blessing on these pupils as they progress with their education and future lives. We look forward to seeing the pupils and their families on the day.

Beginning of school year blessing

As our annual beginning of year mass could not proceed as normal, Fr. White visited the school on Wednesday 23rd September and blessed the school, the pupils and the staff ahead of the coming academic year. We thank Fr. White for continuously looking after us spiritually and for this blessing.

School Calendar 2021

Once again this year, we are offering parents/guardians an opportunity to sponsor our school calendar for 2021 before it is offered to the community. This is a popular item that is well supported in the local community with prominent exposure. If you are interested in sponsoring a page the cost is €30.00. This is a great opportunity for advertising within the local area. If you are interested, please send your details and logo to Sabrina in our school office.

Sacraments

During these unprecedented times, it has been difficult on all families in the run up to Communion and Confirmations. Finally a date was set in stone! Congratulations to our fifth and sixth class of 2020 who were confirmed on August 23rd in St. Cormac's Church. We are now looking forward to our 2nd class of 2020, who will be making their First Holy Communion on September 27th at 12.30pm. Parents and siblings only to attend.

GAA Coaching

We welcomed back the coaches from Co. Wexford GAA last week. The pupils are delighted to recommence the coaching. This term will focus on developing football and fundamental movement skills. Training will continue each Tuesday morning and all pupils are asked to remember gum shields.

Attendance/Punctuality: This year our top priority is everyone's health. While it is accepted that there is a direct link between school attendance and pupil progress we must make exceptions this year. We thank you all for erring on the side of caution - keeping children home who are unwell, getting GP advice when the symptoms are on the Covid-19 list and observing all the guidelines around isolation etc. It will mean attendance figures will be lower this year. However if we manage to keep the school open and keep each other well we are doing the right thing. Please do keep up punctuality. Please keep letting us know details of all absences by emailing class teachers and thank you for following the protocols.

The school is obliged, by law, to inform Tusla when a pupil is absent for a total of 20 school days in one school year. Obviously the whole idea is to miss as little time as possible. As teachers have to fill in the category of absence when completing the roll on Aladdin it is essential that an email is sent in after every absence explaining it. Please note if absences are Covid 19-related and we have all your email notes, this will be indicated to Tusla.

Homework

Homework will recommence on Monday 5th October. Further details will be shared next week.

Communication between home and school

This school year is very different in so many ways. A particularly noticeable change is with regards to the way in which the school communicates with the parents/families of the school. Boolavogue N.S. is very mindful of the new restrictions in place and the constraints which these could have on the natural conversation we are used to. With this in mind, several methods of communication have been established.

Email

General school information will be sent from the school Aladdin account to the email which was provided for each family back in February 2020. This will replace the tradition of sending notes home in school bags. **It is vital that parents regularly check these emails in order to ensure an important notice is not missed.** If you ever need to change the contact email address, please notify Sabrina.

If you have any concerns about your child, report an absence or inform of your child's class teacher of something, **you can contact your child's teacher directly on the email address below.**

The emails are as follows:

- juniorinfants@boolavoguens.ie
- seniorinfants@boolavoguens.ie
- firstsecondclass@boolavoguens.ie
- thirdfourthclass@boolavoguens.ie
- fifthsixthclass@boolavoguens.ie
- set2020@boolavoguens.ie

Alternatively you can call the school office directly and a call back can be arrange. All calls can be made through Sabrina, our school secretary. Similarly if you have a message to give to your child re: who is collecting them etc., please, for insurance reasons, contact the school directly on 053-9366998.

Twitter

Our Twitter feed @Boolavogue_NS is regularly updated to give an insight into daily life here at Boolavogue N.S.

Seesaw

Seesaw is a digital portfolio tool which allows pupils to store their work in an online space and gain feedback from their teacher. It can be used on a laptop or tablet. It effectively enables teachers to set tasks or assignments and include instructions or templates for students to use at home. This is an effective tool for children to share their learning at home. Seesaw will enable parents to stay informed of the learning that is taking place in school, now that we cannot invite parents into the school.

Website

Our school website, www.boolavoguens.ie, will continue to be regularly updated. Revised school policies and new information will be posted here when relevant.

St Cormac's Parents' Association

St. Cormac's Parents' Association has always been, and remains to be, a vital part of the school community at Boolavogue N.S. The parents' association adds so much to the environment and atmosphere of the school and helps immensely with ensuring the pupils of Boolavogue N.S. continue to be exposed to meaningful and exciting education opportunities.

The AGM will be held in the coming month, ensuring all current HSE guidelines are followed. All details will follow in due course.

We extend a great thank you to Yvonne Sweeney who has served as chairperson over the past two years. We thank you for your utmost dedication and commitment.

Super Savers

In line with the HSE/DES Covid-19 guidelines, unfortunately we are unable to hold super savers for the foreseeable future. If you are a super saver, you have the choice of two options. Option one is to freeze your account until we get up and running again. Option two is to withdraw all your savings and start a fresh once super savers resumes.

In order to avail of either option you must send in an email to Sabrina stating your preferred choice. Thanking you for your co-operation

Covid-19: Advice when sending your child to School

When to keep your child at home and phone your GP

Do not send your child to school or childcare if any of the following is true.

Your child has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- any other common symptoms of coronavirus such as a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
- been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus

You will need to:

1. Isolate your child. This means keeping them at home and completely avoiding contact with other people, as much as possible. Your child should only leave your home to have a test or to see your GP.
2. Phone your GP. They will advise you if your child needs a coronavirus test.
3. Everyone that your child lives with should also restrict their movements, at least until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.
4. Treat your child at home for their symptoms.

When it's okay to send your child to school

It's usually okay to send your child to school if they:

- only have nasal symptoms, such as a runny nose or a sneeze
- do not have a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more (as long as their temperature has not been lowered by taking any form of paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- do not have a cough
- have not been in close contact with anyone who has coronavirus
- do not live with anyone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
- have been told by a GP that their illness is caused by something else that is not coronavirus. Your GP will tell you when they can return to school or childcare.
- have got a negative ('not detected') coronavirus test result and have not had symptoms for 48 hours. **Please furnish the school with a copy of the text message confirming a negative result before returning to school.**

Signing in or out for late or early Pupils

In order to keep track of pupil's whereabouts for health and safety, a record book is kept inside the main door. **This book will now be filled in by a member of staff when you come to the door.** The book records any pupil absences during the school day, for example, feeling sick, a trip to the dentist etc. The time of the pupil leaving is recorded along with a reason, time of return where appropriate and signature by either guardian or teacher. This record book is brought to a designated fire point in the event of a fire drill or fire alarm sounding. This ensures a comprehensive record of pupil attendance in the school throughout the day after the morning rolla has been called. This forms part of the Health and Safety Statement policy.

Allianz Pupil Insurance

An email outlining details about the Allianz pupil insurance, along with an attached form, was sent on September 15th to all families. It is one form per child. Please note that this is entirely voluntary.

If you wish to avail of it, please return the completed form and the exact fee in an envelope, clearly marked with your child's name, to the school before or on **30th September 2020.**

Voluntary Contribution

As recognised by the department inspectorate in 2016, our pupils experience a wide range of hands on and practical learning opportunities. These require significant planning, preparation, resourcing and funding. To this end, a contribution of €100 is asked for on a purely voluntary basis. We understand that this is a significant amount of money but it enables the teaching staff of the school to offer resources and experiences that would otherwise be impossible to facilitate given the funding levels given to our schools. It also funds our text-a-parent/email service which keeps parents updated of closures/events etc that may impact the daily routine of the school. This service, as you can imagine, is costly to run each month. **We are grateful for any amount which you would chose to contribute to the school and this can also be done in installments and at any time of the year. Should you wish to make a contribution or set up an instalment scheme, please send in the money in an envelope to the school. Please mark your child/children's name and amount of money included clearly on the envelope.** We thank all families for their continued support of our school and look forward to progressing together in the new academic year.

Electrical Works Project

During the school closure, the electrical fittings across the entire main school building were updated and modernised under the Emergency Works grant. This has been a very welcome update to our school.

New building project

The 21st of September was a day of much excitement on the grounds of Boolavogue N.S as we saw the arrival of the Breen Brothers Builders Ltd to the school grounds in order to begin preparatory work for the upcoming construction project.

Over the coming days and months we will see the bike shed, water tower and shelters being demolished and replaced with a modern building comprising of 2 mainstream classrooms and a SET classroom.

This development has been long awaited and anticipated and is very much welcomed by our entire school community.

Now only one challenge remains for the teachers, how to keep wandering eyes focused on in class activities and not monitoring the progress outside the windows!!!

A Word from our Acting Principal

A chairde,

It is my absolute pleasure to write to you all as we end our first month back at school after our reopening, following the most unusual, unprecedented and frightening six months. I think it is safe to say that our reopening has been successful and it is evident from the positive attitudes each day that both the pupils and the staff are both happy and enthusiastic to be reunited with each other and the school which we all love so well.

The success of our reopening would not have been possible without the sheer dedication and cooperation from our families, both parents/guardians and pupils. On behalf of the Board of Management and all of the staff, I thank you all most sincerely for strictly following all of the practices and procedures which have been set in place. Now, it is critical that adherence to these practices is continued, in order to help us to do our best to try and minimise the risk of Covid-19 and keep members of our school community safe and well.

The pupils have shown amazing resilience, bravery and contentment since returning to school. They deserve huge credit for playing a massive role in ensuring we all returned to school in a safe manner. They have been continuously carrying out good hygiene practices and social distancing from other class bubbles and pods and have done so without a complaint! They have done themselves, their families and their teachers proud.

I welcome all of our new families who have joined our school community this academic year. We welcomed 15 new Junior Infant pupils in August. They have adapted and settled into school life exceptionally well. I also welcome our new staff members. I have no doubt that you will all be extremely happy at Boolavogue N.S. for many days and years to come.

We will see lots of exciting changes to our school in the coming months as the building project begins. This comes after a lot of hard work and determination from Ms. Mullery and the Board of Management. This is such a welcome piece of excitement in our current world of uncertainty and despair.

As I continue to proudly act up in Ms. Mullery's absence, I wish to thank all of the parents/guardians for your continued support, trust and co-operation which you have demonstrated since I began as acting principal in February. Boolavogue N.S. has a wonderful cohort of parents and families and your support is always appreciated. I look forward to continuing to work with you all over the coming months.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Aoife Bennett