

**Parents Association
St. Mary's National School,
Ballygunner**

**Telephone: 051-878388
E-mail: office@ballygunner.ie
www.ballygunner.ie**



**Newsletter
Issue 65 – Summer 2023**

A Message from Mr. O'Reilly

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As this school year ends it is a good time to reflect on our year's work. It has been a very progressive year with many notable achievements across our school community.

It was a memorable year, some highlights for me are; our weekly Class Assemblies, our school show 'Matilda's Magical Adventure', our Amber Flag award for promoting positive mental health and our St. Bridget's Cloak....which grew into something incredibly special!

School self-evaluation and improvement continues. 2022/23 was an investigation year for phonics/spelling, preparation for teaching/learning and inclusion policy. This work is ongoing, 2023/24 is implementation year, as we strive to improve pupils' learning experiences and outcomes.

Every classroom in our school has a new digital interactive board and access to 100Mbps Wi-Fi. We recently invested in 32 iPads to develop using digital technology to support pupils learning. Our recently ratified Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) provides the foundation for all this work.

I wish to compliment all our pupils, they have been superb this year. It is essential our pupils develop towards their potential, have the skills to deal with worries and disappointments, feel confident in coping with new challenges, have social skills to form new friendships and are motivated to learn. Next school year we will be investigating the Department of Education Wellbeing Policy

Framework and including it as part of our school improvement plan.

Our school library team has been so busy this year. Our team of parent volunteers assisted by some pupils and staff completed a full audit of our junior and senior libraries. We had a successful secondhand book sale and re-invested in our libraries, ensuring that all the latest and popular titles are available for our pupils.

I want to thank our Board of Management for their support and guidance, all our school staff for their hard work and commitment to our pupils and all of you our parents/guardians, for the interest you have in supporting your child/ren's learning.

I wish our departing 6th class pupils the very best as they move to Secondary School. They are a talented group of pupils who are a credit to their families. Finally, I wish all associated with St. Mary's N.S. a restful and enjoyable Summer holiday. Here's hoping we will all return refreshed on Thursday 31st August when pupils return for 2023/24 school year.

Killian O'Reilly
Principal Teacher



What's going on at School...

School Musical

Here at St. Mary's National School, we have a rich tradition of school shows. Our productions to date include:

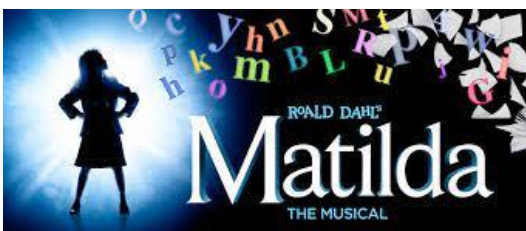
- ❖ The Wizard of Oz (2005)
- ❖ The Sound of Music (2007)
- ❖ Annie (2009)
- ❖ Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs (2013)
- ❖ Once Upon an Ogre (2015)
- ❖ Charlie's Chocolatey Adventure (2017)
- ❖ The Greatest Gunner (2019)

This year's musical was Matilda Jr, and hit the stage of Ballygunner from 12th – 15th June!

Auditions took place in February, with rehearsals beginning soon after. The cast consists of 80 fifth and sixth class pupils, all of whom have worked incredibly hard. They have learnt their lines, sung their hearts out and danced their socks off; giving up lunchtimes, after school and even 2 Sundays to rehearse. Thanks to the staff production team (Emma Tallon, Brenda Giles, Niamh Dennehy, Liz Kearney, Aoife Piper, Sandra Hayden, Colm Walsh, Dearbhla Kennedy, Sarah Phelan) for their time and tremendous efforts in bringing the show to the stage.

The musical took place during school hours for the whole school on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th June. Public shows were scheduled for the evening – Tuesday 13th, Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th June at 7pm.

Well done to all the children, staff members and parents involved in the musical !! It was a huge success !!



Confirmation

The 6th Class Confirmations took place on Friday, April 28th this year.

Present on the day was Fr. Liam Power and Bishop Alphonsus. Well done to all the musicians and readers who were excellent on the day.

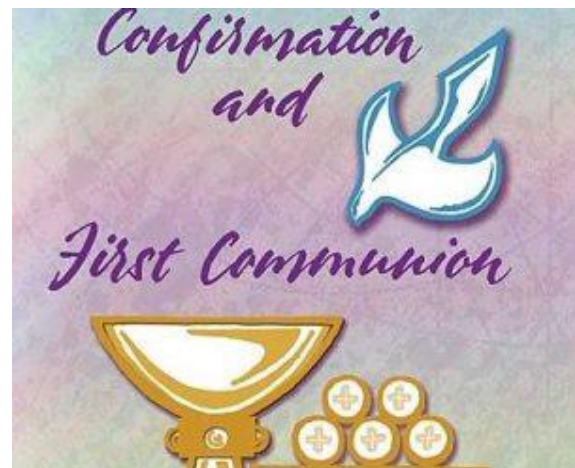
Congratulations to all the boys and girls who were confirmed. 6th class were blessed with lovely weather and it was a great to celebrate with all their family and friends.

First Holy Communion

Our 2nd Class boys and girls (Mrs. O'Shea's, Mr. O'Neill's & Ms. Cantwell's) all made their First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 6th in St. Mary's Church, Ballygunner.

It was wonderful to see our pupils dressed smartly on the day and they performed brilliantly in front of family and friends. The sun even shone on what was supposed to be a miserable day!

Fr. Liam officiated on the day and many thanks to Declan Foley who accompanied our songs. We hope everyone had an enjoyable day as they received the holy bread for the first time.



Buddy Bench

Another great feature added to our school. The Buddy Bench
It will give our students and staff a nice space in front of our garden to catch up with friends.



5th & 6th Class

Thank you to South East Viking Orienteering and Ms. Hayes for engaging with our 5th & 6th classes in some really interesting mapping exercises. It got very competitive ! Well done to all involved.



ART

Mr. Brehney's 6th Class

Huge congratulations to Aoise O'Dwyer who won the Anti-Racism Schools Visual Art Competition as part of Waterford Anti-Racism month 2023. Aoise's art piece will now be printed on large canvases in Waterford libraries across the county.



Junior Achievement Awards

A huge well done to all who participated in this years LEAP programme held in SETU recently. A lot of hard work and preparation went into the presentations and business ideas that were put forward.

A huge well done to those who won the 'BEST BUSINESS PLAN' award.

Junior Entrepreneurs 2023 !!



Sport

Ballygunner U13

SETU Arena, Tuesday, May 23

Ballygunner 1-15 St Declan's 2-6

This was an outstanding game of hurling from start to finish. It was very closely contested but Ballygunner managed to lead for all of the match. The players from both sides played to a very high standard. The highlights were several saves from Joe Byrne and 1-10 from Michael Maloney. Dara Cunningham and Michael Moloney accepted the Billy Howlett trophy on behalf of the school. This was our eighth win in a row and our thirteenth in all. Well done to all involved.



Camogie Final

Our School Camogie Teams continue to produce bountiful fruits, with the 2023 Indoor Camogie Cup, the Mini 7s Eastern Title and Oliver Murphy Cup all retained this year, yet again in some style.

Alannah Lehane led our Indoor Team to their 8th Title in a Row in early March, whilst Isabel Cullinan captained our Mini 7s outfit to their 7th Title in a Row a few weeks later.

All eyes in recent weeks were on the battle for the U13 Oliver Murphy Cup, where Butlerstown and Ballygunner ploughed through their respective groups to come head-to-head in an Eastern Final in SETU Arena on May 23rd. In a remarkably close encounter, with the lead changing hands on no less than eight different occasions, it was Ballygunner that emerged triumphant to lift the Cup for the seventh successive year.

It was truly a remarkable encounter between two fine Camogie Schools – a testament to the preparations being done each year at this level. For Ballygunner, we can now look forward to setting

out to defend the County Title that we have held since 2016 – a date with destiny against Lismore awaits in June.

Oliver Murphy Cup Champions 2023: P Chapman; S Moloney, A Lehane; S Flynn, E Murphy (Capt.), G Cooney; B Sheridan, E Bourke; C Connolly, B Fitzgerald, E Laphorne; N Toomey, E Butler; A Keevins, I Cullinan, K Finan, H Connolly, E Walsh, E Harte, J Volden, A McMonagle.



Waterford Primary Schools Athletics

On 16th May, in a sundrenched RSC stadium, St Mary's school also shone bright. For the first time ever, all 12 of our relay teams came home with medals! Many thanks to the wonderful support from parents Sonya Butler, Linda Barnes, Hilary O Sullivan, Megan Power, Caitriona Kennedy and Sarah Reid. Well done to the boys who also came home with a cup for Best Boys category, and the girls who also received a cup for finishing 2nd overall.

Here are the relay results :

1st class boys – **2nd place** - Cillian Anderson, Jordan Butler, Joe Burke, Iarla De Paor, Max O'Brien (sub)

1st class girls – **1st place** – Denisa Lipovska, Ruby Mai Kennedy, Amelia Ryan, Freya Power, April Molloy, Leila Frisby (sub)

2nd class boys – **1st place** - Cian Bourke, Aaron Walsh, Scott Buchanan, Oscar Prendergast, Harry Knox (sub)

2nd class girls – **2nd place** - Ciara O'Donoghue, Khaleesi Ryan, Hannah Reid, Millie Walsh, Sienna Moroney (sub)

3rd class boys – **2nd place** - Harry Kennedy, Shay D, Steyn Binil, Aidan Gallagher, Bobby Everett, Rui de Silva (sub)

3rd class girls – **2nd place** - Sarah Whelton, Lola, Anna Mae O'Reilly, Grainne Toomey, Anna Hearne (sub)

4th class boys – **1st place** - Ethan Walsh, Ryan Anderson, James O'Donnell, Conor McLoughlin, Neil Russell (sub)

4th class girls – **3rd place** - Amelie Devereux, April Larkin, Kate O'Mahony and Evelyne de Paor

5th class boys – **1st place** - Ryan Dwyer , Kristopher Sun, Daragh O Sullivan, Kareem Elsadig, Liam Walsh (sub)

5th class girls – **1st place** - Grace Cooney, Mila Sharikova, Siofra Moloney, Aoibhe McMonagle, Mia and Caoimhe Quinlan (subs)

6th class boys – **1st place** - Dara Cunningham, Liam Anderson, Dominik, Oisin

6th class girls – **2nd place** - Erin Butler, Joanna Jose, Jessica Voldan, Evie O'Donoghue, Aiveen O'Donoghue (sub)

There were also individual medals won by:

Cillian Anderson - 3rd in 300	Alex O'Sullivan 3 rd in 300m
Max O'Brien – 3 rd in 300m	Cian Bourke 2 nd in 300m
Conor Brophy – 3 rd in 300m	Ciara O'Donoghue 1 st in 300m
Chloe Sheahan - 3rd in 300m	Khaleesi Ryan- 1 st in 300m, 4 th in 80m
Ruby Mai Kennedy 1st 300m & 1 st in 100m Sprint	Aaron Walsh- 1 st in 300m
April Molloy- 1 st in 300m	Millie Walsh – 1 st in 300m, 3 rd in 80m
Amelia Ryan – 2 nd in 300m	Harry Knox- 2 nd in 80m
Freya Power – 2 nd in 300m, 3 rd in 100m sprint.	Scott Buchanan – 1 st in 300 metre
Bobby Everett- 2 nd in 300m	Oscar Prendergast – 2 nd 300 metre
Lola Quinn- 3 rd in 300m	Ethan Walsh - Gold in 500m
Anna mae o Reilly- 1 st in 300m	Conor Mcloughlin – Sprint
Harry Kennedy 2 nd in 300m	James O'Donnell- 1st in 500m
Ethan Walsh - Gold in 500m	Erin Butler - 1st in 600m
Conor Mcloughlin – Sprint	Emma Bourke – 4 th in 600m
James O'Donnell- 1st in 500m	Jessica Voldan – 4 th in 100m sprints
	Evie O'Donoghue 3 rd in the 600m
	Dara Cunningham 3 rd in 100m.
	Isabelle Walsh placed in the 600m.

Fundraiser

We were delighted to support Pieta House this year. As a result of our school's Pyjamas Day we raised €950.

Well done to the staff and students for contributing to such a great cause.

Parents Association

The Parents Association would like to appeal for new members next term. It is so important to be a voice for our children and to have that link with the school.

The Parents Association is completely voluntary, but with members leaving the committee as their children's time in BG comes to an end it is hard to see how it can continue without some new parents joining. We would love to welcome anyone who would like to be involved.

Parking and Traffic

As with every newsletter, this is just a gentle reminder to be extra vigilant on approach and departure to the school on your daily commute. Safety is always paramount for our children. Johnathan does a fantastic job daily with traffic management and ensures the drop-offs and pickups run smoothly and efficiently.

Havenwood as always have been super accommodating allowing us the use of their car park, I would ask you to continue to be respectful of their space and green areas during collection and drop off times.



School Calendar 2023/2024

School will re-open following the Summer break on **Thursday August 31st 2023**

Halloween Mid Term Break School will be closed from Monday 30 th October until Friday 3 rd November 2023 Re-opening on Monday, 6 th November 2023
Christmas Holidays Early closing on Friday 22 nd December 2023 Re-opening on Monday 8 th January 2024
St. Brigid's Day School will be closed on Monday 5 th February 2024
Spring Mid Term Break School will be closed on Thursday 15 th and Friday 16 th February 2024. Re-opening on Monday, February 19 th 2024
St Patrick's Day School will be closed on Monday 18 th March 2024
Easter Holidays Early closing on Friday 22 nd March 2024 Re-opening on Monday 8 th April 2024
May Bank Holiday School will be closed from Monday 6 th May 2024 until Friday 10 th May 2024 Re-opening on Monday 13 th May 2024.
June Bank Holiday School will be closed on Monday 3 rd June 2024
Summer Holidays Early closing on Friday 28 th June 2024

Early closing:

- 11.45 Special Classes for pupils with ASD.
- 12.00 Junior Infants & Senior Infants.
- 12.10 All other classes (1st to 6th).

Please keep for reference throughout the school year. A copy of this can be downloaded from the school website: www.ballygunner.ie

Kids Corner – Laughs & Giggles

Q: Why don't oysters share their pearls?

A: Because they're shellfish

Q: What did the ocean say to the sailboat?

A: Nothing it just waved.

Q: What do you call a fish with no eyes?

A: A fsh.

Q: Knock, knock. Who's there?

A: Ice cream. Ice cream who? Ice cream if you don't let me in!

Q: Knock, knock. Who's there?

A: Gladys. Gladys who? Gladys summer.

Q: What did the seagull say to his kids?

A: Call me on the shellphone.

Q: What holds the sun up in the sky?

A: Sunbeams.



*Wishing everyone a wonderful
& safe Summer ☺*