

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

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**Newsletter
Issue 35 – Christmas 2013.**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With Christmas holidays fast approaching on Friday 20th I wish to thank you all for your continuing support since August 2013. It has been a busy first term here at St. Mary's National School. Both pupils and staff are looking forward to a well-earned rest.

I wish to remind you all how important a close link between home and school is for the academic progress of your children. We plan to launch a new website in early 2014. It will help with home/school communications. Please remember that all teaching staff are available to meet by appointment. Arrangements can be made through Anne Quealy our school secretary on 878388 between 8:45am and 3pm daily.

The Department of Education Inspectorate visited our school on Monday 11th November to follow-up on recommendations made in their Whole

School Evaluation Report dated May 2012. We are extremely satisfied with the Inspector's positive findings in the areas of writing, maths problem solving and collaborative learning. I wish to compliment all our pupils and staff on their work.

I look forward to consulting with our Parents Association and all families in term two when we will review a draft of our new school anti-bullying policy in line with Department of Education and Skills circular 45/2013.

Our Christmas raffle 2013 has been well supported, sincere thanks to those who sponsored prizes. The funds collected will be used to establish an essential 'School I.C.T. Servicing Fund'. This will ensure all I.C.T. equipment is in good working order.

There has been great excitement in so many classrooms recently with Christmas plays and concerts in full swing. It was wonderful to see so many parents, grandparents, families and friends arriving to see the various performances. It gives us all a great lift at this time of year!

Huge congratulations to our pupils on all their achievements this term, one very special mention goes to our Boys Under 13 Gaelic Football Team. They were crowned Allianz Cumann na mBunscol Port Láirge Division One County Champions for the first time on Thursday 28th November.

And finally, just to confirm we return to school for the new term on Monday 6th January 2014.

Nollaig shona daoibh go léir!

Killian O'Reilly
Principal Teacher



Christmas Charity Collection

Many thanks to all of you for your generosity towards the St Vincent de Paul non perishable collection with particular emphasis this year on baby products in lieu of Christmas presents for teacher! A special thanks also to our teachers for foregoing presents again this year.

Service of Light

Our Confirmation Classes took part in The Service of Light in Ballygunner Church last Tuesday 10 December. This was a very beautiful ceremony in which the pupils and parents participated with great sincerity and reverence. It was the first of the three ceremonies which take place during the Confirmation Year. A Service of Commitment will take place in March and Confirmation takes place on Fri 23 May.

Christmas Plays

Well done to all our pupils who performed so well in their Christmas plays. A special thanks to the teachers for their hard work also.

School Trips

Many thanks to all the teachers who organised trips in to Winterval for our pupils. A big thank you to the Lions Club for facilitating visits to Santa at Faithlegg and Mount Juliet for our pupils in our Autism classes. The children had a wonderful time.

Family Mass Notice

A Family Christmas Mass will be celebrated at 5pm on Christmas Eve in St. Joseph's & St Benildus Church. All are welcome.

Birthday Party Invitations

We are appealing to all parents and children **not** to distribute birthday party invitations in school. This practice has in the past caused much upset and heartache among our pupils. We would be grateful if you could support this initiative.

Buddy System

Many thanks to the 6th Class pupils for being such great buddies to our Junior Infant pupils and in particular for helping at the School Gate in the mornings. Well done everyone!

Lost & Found Notice

The Parents Association have set up a Lost and Found Bin at the back of the school. Unlabelled items will be placed in the bin and can be reclaimed from **3pm on Schooldays**. Parents may access the 'bin' through the front door of the school. The bin is located straight ahead, at the glass doors (before you turn right for the Sports Hall). The bin will be emptied at each half term, and unclaimed items will be brought to a charity shop.

Parents Association Fundraising Bag Pack at Tesco Ardkeen

This fundraiser will take place on Sunday 22 Dec. from 10am – 8pm to raise funds for purchasing PE equipment and IT servicing. Many thanks to all who have volunteered to date. More volunteers are needed please from 12pm onwards.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Mr O'Reilly and his wife Brid on the birth of their baby daughter in November.

Christmas Cards

Thanks to all our families for adhering to our policy of no Christmas cards this year as part of our Green Schools Initiative.

Philippines Typhoon Haiyan Appeal

A huge thank you for your kind donations on our recent no-uniform day in support of the victims of the November typhoon. The €800 raised has been forwarded to the Red Cross.

Litter Monsters

Congrats to 1st Class (Ms Hayes) who created litter monsters for a competition in November run by Waterford City Council. Representatives from the class attended the City Environmental Awards reception where they accepted 1st prize in the 6-7 Age Category. Well done everyone!



Dates for your Diary:

Fri 20 Dec School closes from 12 noon – 12.30pm

Mon 6 Jan School reopens at 9.00am

**Wed
Jan 15** Parents talk for First Communion pupils

Mid-Term Break

School will close at the usual time on **Fri 14 Feb** and will re-open on **Mon 24 Feb**.

**Tues
25 Feb** First Penance

Sat 10 May First Holy Communion

Fri 23 May Confirmation

SPORTS NEWS

Congratulations to Ewan & Katie Nolke who represented St Mary's N.S. in the Munster School Swimming Championships in Limerick last weekend. Both pupils swam well in their events. Ewan won a silver medal in the 50 metres freestyle in a time of 32.16 seconds. Well done Ewan!

Historic Victory for St Mary's

Ballygunner: 0-07 Lismore: 0-04
St Mary's NS Ballygunner made history in December when they won the U'13 Boys

Roinn A County Football Title for the first time ever after a hard fought 0-7 to 0-4 victory over Lismore in Fraher Field.

Thanks to an exceptional team performance by a committed and talented St Mary's squad, Ballygunner can savour the riches of a County title for the year to come. Both sides had notched up a string of impressive results on their way to the County decider so this clash was always destined to produce something special. This clash duly lived up to the pre match hype with both sides emptying the tank out in Dungarvan's GAA Colosseum.

Credit for this historic achievement is owed to Ballygunner's long serving manager, Derek O'Neill. Mr O'Neill has spent decades at the coalface of GAA in St Mary's and his record at the helm is remarkable.

Leading by 0-4 to 0-1 at the midway point, through points from Gavin Corbett (2), John Kavanagh and Kevin Mahony, Ballygunner withstood a ferocious second half of football to emerge with a 3 point victory. In a second half drenched in physicality, passion and dexterity, Ballygunner maintained their composure and a brace of points from Tom Gallagher combined with a fine individual effort from Rory Fitzpatrick was enough to secure the triumph.

Celebrations were in full flight when the Chairman of Cumann na mBunscol and St Mary's Principal Killian O'Reilly was on hand to present the County Shield to the winners' captain, Paul Cotter. Setting a national record, this is the second County Title that a Principal has presented to his own school in a calendar year, having presented the County Camogie Cup to his team in June.

Afterwards, Mr O'Neill pinpointed the upcoming Hurling League as the squad's next major target. An ominous sign indeed for all would be challengers in 2014.

(Reprinted with kind permission from Mr Colin Breheny, St Mary's answer to Marty Morrissey)

Green Schools Initiative



Great news for our Green Schools Committee and for our school. Waterford City Council has approved our application for funding for our Biodiversity Project which is entitled "Creating New Habitats in our School Grounds." We eagerly await the cheque for €1,232 which we will add to the €500 we won last year for Best Carpool School in Ireland 2013. After Christmas we will commence work on creating our new habitats. If anyone has any ideas, wants to build a few nesting boxes or wants to help out with digging and planting we would be delighted to hear from you!

Well done to the superb group working on our Green Schools Committee this year and well done also to all the pupils, parents and staff who continuously promote the Green Schools themes of litter and waste management, water and energy conservation and sustainable travel. Don't forget over Christmas to keep your used batteries, stamps and ink cartridges for recycling in the collection boxes in the main entrance hall.

Happy Christmas and New Year from everyone on The Green Schools Committee!

Fionn Smith

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE WINNERS

Many thanks to all our sponsors for donating such great prizes for our Christmas Raffle. This year the proceeds from the Christmas raffle will go towards servicing the IT equipment in our classrooms.

The Christmas Raffle winners are:

1st prize – 2 night stay for two people in any

FBD Hotel in Ireland – **Suzanne Ryan**

2nd prize – Ardkeen Stores Food Hamper – **Anthony Phelan**

3rd prize – S Security €150 Hamper – **Georgina Larkin**

4th prize – 2014/15 Juvenile Membership for Waterpark RFC x 2 – **Jimmy Butler & John McNicholas**

5th prize – €100 Cash prize sponsored by Axa Insurance – **Grace Duggan**

6th prize – 1 week free at De La Salle Summer Camp worth €75 – **Molly Cunningham**

7th prize – €70 Kids Party at Ballygunner GAA Club – **Pat Flynn**

8th prize – €50 Voucher for Island Lane – **G. Mooney**

9th prize – Health Food Hamper from Chia Bia – **Grainne Nevins**

10th prize – €50 Voucher for Dawn Meats – **Denis McIntee**

11th prize – €50 Voucher for Ardkeen Barbers – **Jackie Ryan**

12th prize – €50 voucher for Run Amuck – **Jill Williams**

13th prize – Lunch for two at Becketts worth €30 – **Anne Fitzgerald**

14th prize – 2 free Art classes worth €20 at Chowder ARTS Academy – **Andrew Power**

15th prize – Side of Salmon – **Kim Sheehan**

16th prize – Bottle of Wine from Tesco Ardkeen – **Amy Kehoe**

Congratulations everyone and thanks to all our sellers.

Kids Corner

Q. What goes red, white, red, white?

A. Santa rolling down a hill!

Q. What does Rudolph want for Christmas?

A. A snowy sleighstation!

Q. Where does Santa's little helpers go to relax?

A. The elf farm!

Brainteaser:

What's next in the following sequence?

1, 2, 3, 5, 8, ?

Happy Christmas Everyone