

Whitechurch National School

March/ April Newsletter 2026



Spring Fete

The much anticipated School and Parish Fete is set for **Saturday 25th April, 12-3pm** at the school. Please let us know if you can help with stalls on the day. We would encourage parents of J1 and S1 in particular to give us a hand with the games for a short slot- please let the class teachers or Laoighse in the office know if you can help!

Why not do a clear out over the Easter holidays and keep some things aside for the Fete!

Some items for donating:

- good quality bric a brac- no furniture
- bottles of in date drinks/ toiletries etc.
- clothes, toys, books

The school will be open for a number of evenings for dropping off donations in the days leading up to the Fete. More details to follow!

Bumper Fete Raffle! The link will soon be going live for tickets- please share on social media and help spread the word about our Fete!

Watch out for more info in your email soon!

Seachtain na Gaeilge

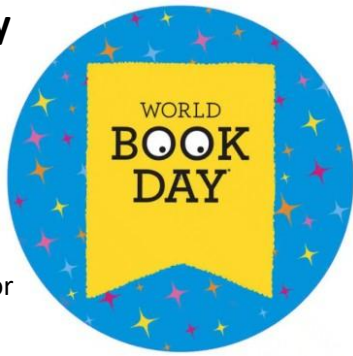
We were delighted to be celebrating all things Irish last week. We kicked off our Seachtain na Gaeilge with a parade on our 'Lá Glas' (Green Day!) See our photo at the end of the parade below-

We look forward to lots more fun Gaeilge activities this week!



World Book Day

All pupils have recently received a World Book Day voucher. This can be redeemed at book shops for a special World Book Day book or else taken off the total cost of another book.



We celebrated World Book Day in WNS with workshops from author, Shane Hegarty, with thanks to Aoife Murray for cofunding this with the BOM. All pupils also completed book related activities and got to visit our book tasting restaurant in the hall organised by Mrs. Shirley! The winners of our reading challenge were Jordi Gallagher in Senior Infants and Niall Webb in 4th Class. Well done!

Traffic and Road Safety

There should be no parking except for school collection/ aftercare minibuses in the school laneway- double yellow lines are marked out to show this. The Drop Off Zone has also been extended to allow 3 cars to use it at once. Please remember to drive on the marked yellow area at the DOZ and to only allow pupils out at the school side of the car at the designated area. Finally, we would implore drivers not to block the main road before the gates are opened in the mornings- park along the road or let pupils out to walk a little bit instead.



WNS Choir sing at Wesley Interschools Music Festival

Congratulations and well done to our school Choir who took part in the Wesley Interschools Music Festival recently. They sang their song, 'Rock, Paper, Scissors', beautifully and did themselves proud gaining an excellent 4th place! Many thanks to Choir Director, Jenni Harrison and Eve Prendergast, who assisted, for preparing them so well for this competition yet again!



Staff News

Last week, we said farewell and thanked Ms. June Tector for her time at the school this year acting as substitute teacher for Ms. Eimear Durnin, while she was on maternity Leave. We welcomed Ms. Durnin back to take over from Ms. Tector as SET teacher for J1 and 4th Class. Ms. Tector will take up a new position for the rest of the year on the local sub panel so I am sure that we will see her back at WNS soon to cover any staff absences!

Retirements

We held a staff dinner recently to celebrate Ms. Terri Lalor, who retired from full time teaching last year. The BOM presented Terri with a gift alongside a staff gift to thank her for her time as SET Teacher and SEN Coordinator at WNS. Terri is thankfully still with us part time in her new role of Play Therapist.

2 long serving members of staff will be retiring at the end of this school year- Angelina Cervi (SNA) and Yvonne Shirley (1st Class teacher and Assistant Principal). Yvonne will have completed 40 years teaching at the school by the end of this year- a momentous achievement! Both have contributed so much to our school and we look forward to celebrating them later on in the year- plans are afoot- more to follow!

PTA Easter Egg Hunt and Raffle



The PTA are once again holding an Easter Egg Raffle for the pupils. The tickets are €1 each and there will be 3 winners per class with a giant egg for 1 lucky winner in the school! Please send in the raffle ticket money with your child on Friday 27th March. As well as being a fun event, the raffle helps to fund an Easter Egg Hunt for the pupils before the Easter holidays. After costs, any funds raised will go towards PTA fundraising. Thank you to the PTA for organising this event again for our pupils!

Pupil Mini Fair

Thank you very much to all of the parents who helped out at our School Mini Fair. Thank you also to Mrs. Shirley and the staff team for their work on the fair and the setting up of the games and stalls. The children all enjoyed the special day and it was so lovely to see all of the older children looking after their 'buddy' younger pupils as they went around the different activities. The games in the hall were a great success and the senior classes organised their various stalls of toys, books, cakes etc. so well. It has been suggested that there might well be some future Whitechurch Fete organising committee members rising through the ranks! The Mini Fair was a huge success and a fantastic €1309 was raised which is going towards PTA fundraising for school resources and equipment.

Thank you to the following parents who volunteered to help: Gillian Ryan, Rachel O'Donoghue, Aoife Murray, Elaine Murphy, Carol Ellis, Anastasiia Mandelbaum, Heather Fenton, Biddy Kelly, Cathy Heaney, Rebecca Syme, Anna Williams, Heather Clarke, Shannon Lyttle, Emma Willis, Jenny Sherwin, Catherine Bell, Shauna Gowan, and Zoë Phelan.



World Book Day 2026

Shane Hegarty Workshops



Book Tasting Restaurant



Teaching Practice

We are delighted to welcome student teacher, Fiona Rutledge, to 2nd Class for her school placement this month. We hope that Fiona, who is in her 2nd Year at DCU, will enjoy her time at WNS. Class teachers mentor and guide the teaching practice students and are still responsible for the teaching and learning in the classroom. While the student teachers are completing their lessons, it provides the class teachers with a welcome opportunity to work with small groups of pupils in the classroom.



Dr. Ken Fennelly (Secretary of the Church of Ireland Board of Education), Rev'd David Bowles (Chariperson, WNS BOM), Archbishop Jackson (School Patron) and Sarah Richards (Principal, WNS and Church of Ireland Board of Education) at the recent Patron's Day event where a special plaque to commemorate 50 years of BOMs was presented.

Board of Management Update

At the most recent meeting of the Board of Management at the end of February, a number of items were dealt with and discussed including:

- Fundraising- PTA thanked for helping with Pupil Mini Fair, importance of parental voluntary contributions noted, work on Charity Tax refunds will assist with school funding for this year.
- Finance report for previous school year- has been submitted to the FSSU for the annual submission date for schools and once approved, will be issued to parents. Budgeting and comparison of spending from previous years examined.
- Maintenance matters- we have applied for DEY grant funding to replace and upgrade the electrical, lighting and alarm systems in the older parts of the school. A consultant's report has been compiled and submitted for approval to the DEY.
- Health and Safety- the annual review of the Health and Safety Statement took place along with discussion of the yearly Health and Safety audit. The high standards of building and grounds maintenance were noted with thanks to Gerry Pullman (BOM maintenance and building rep) and Cliff Kenny (caretaker).
- Wellbeing- work on this as a focus area for school self evaluation discussed.
- Other matters discussed- Hot school meals, pupil activities/ workshops/ tours, Spring Fete, Child Protection, Bullying/ Bí Cineálta, staffing matters and the possibility of an afterschool care service located at the school was examined.

At Patron's Day, the Archbishop of Dublin, presented all schools with a special plaque to commemorate 50 years of BOMs. Before these important groups were established, a single manager (usually the priest or rector) ran the school alone! We take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who have given their time so generously over the last 50 years to help manage our school as part of the BOM!



New plaque in place in the school entrance foyer

Ballyroan Library School Quiz

2 teams made up of pupils from 5th and 6th Class represented WNS at the Ballyroan Library School Quiz recently. Although they didn't win on this occasion, they did very well navigating some extremely challenging questions. The pupils involved enjoyed the experience and even met some pupils from other schools again from a recent Chess tournament. Thank you to Ms. Cooke for going with the teams and to parents, Rebecca Syme and Susan Keogh, for providing lifts for the pupils.

Eco Week

At the time of writing, we are looking forward to a visit from South Dublin County Mayor, Pamela Kearns, who will launch SDCC Eco Week at our school. The Green Schools Committee will meet with the Mayor and talk to her about our efforts with all things green at WNS. 6th Class will get to participate in a soap making workshop and have a talk from the mayor also. Do look out in local media for pictures of the visit as the mayor is bring some photographers with her. During the week other classes will participate in some Eco Week workshops- 1st and 2nd Class will have a 'Mad Scientist' workshop and 3rd, 4th and 5th Classes will have 'Wet and Wild Bogland' workshops.

Summer Class Tours

The summer tours have now all been booked and we are looking forward to the different trips! Please take note of the dates below and let the Class Teacher know if your child will **not** be able to attend as costs are calculated based on numbers attending divided by total cost of bus hire.

J1 and SI- Wednesday 17th June- Glenroe Farm

1st and 2nd Class- Monday 15th June- Kildare Open Farm and Activity Centre

3rd, 4th and 5th Class- Thursday 18th June- Emerald Park, Meath

6th Class- Friday 19th June- Full day trip to Carlingford Outdoor Adventure Centre, Co. Louth



All things Cyber Safety!

PTA Cyber Safety Talk

Thank you to Niamh Cacciato (PTA) for organising a talk for parents on cyber safety recently. The talk was delivered by the National Parents Council, of which our PTA is a member. Although the number of parents attending was small, the talk was very useful and informative.

Parent Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete this very short survey for us on your views around a potential smartphone/ social media delay parent led voluntary code.

<https://forms.gle/f9ige1qt7bETfJFn8>

Invitation to Parent Talk at Wesley College

Please see the invitation on this page to a **talk for parents** at Wesley College. It is very kindly extended to all of our parents to attend. The talk will be focussed on looking at the evidence for a Smart phone and social media app delay. Huge thank you to Quentin Heaney for his leadership on this important issue and for including our school community. Further detailed information will issue separately to parents by email.

Delay SMARTPHONE & SOCIAL MEDIA

22nd April, 19:30
Wesley College, Myles Hall
Speaker: Eoghan Cleary

Protecting Children's Wellbeing in an
Unsafe Online World

Evidence to support delaying
full Smartphone and Social Media for Under 16s

ALL WELCOME
TALK NOT SUITABLE FOR UNDER 16S

Eoghan Cleary is a secondary teacher, a columnist for the Irish Times and a lifelong advocate for the protection of children in the online world.

Chess Tournament

On Friday 13th February, the school chess group went to a Chess tournament in St. Colmcille's Senior National School. Our chess teacher, Mr. Megarity even asked people who did chess last year if they would like to go or not and most people that he asked actually came! And they did well as well. It was split into two groups-The Buds and The Masters. I was in the Masters even though we were called "The Masters" we weren't actually chess masters.

It was quite busy since there were four schools there. There were six rounds and two breaks for eating between the rounds. The rounds went well and I won 3 out of 6 games! After all of the rounds they didn't announce the winner for some reason. Then we went home. It was fun and I'd say most people that went (including me) would like to go again.

Seán Cacciato (5th Class)



Cycle

Safety

Training



We are delighted that Cycle Right will be visiting the school once again to provide training to 5th Class in cycle safety for 7 weeks on Thursday afternoons from 12.50-1.50p.m. starting on Thursday 12th March. The Board of Management is very kindly covering the cost for this programme for each pupil.

Topics covered will include: safe equipment; rules of the road; starting and stopping; road positioning; shoulder checking; turning left and right; overtaking and traffic manoeuvres, and, where appropriate to the group, on-road training. Bikes will be provided but those who cycle to school themselves can use their own bike.

Texaco Children's Art Competition

Several of our 4th Class pupils have recently entered the Texaco Children's Art Competition 2026, one of Ireland's most well-known and long-running art competitions for young people. This prestigious competition celebrates imagination, originality and artistic skill and it's wonderful to see the children putting their creativity forward. Below you can see Áine with her wonderful entry!



Enrolment Applications

If you have younger children at home, please make sure that you send in an 'Intention to Enrol' form. This will help us to plan for future enrolments and will ensure that you don't miss out when the time comes to complete the full enrolment application form.

Hot Meals Update

Thank you to all parents who completed the PTA survey on hot meals. The data has been combined with feedback from pupils and staff and has been sent to the hot meals provider for review. We will send out a detailed information note when we receive a response. Our feedback was also used to draw up a submission on behalf of our school's management/ Patron body, The Church of Ireland Board of Education, for an Oireachtas Committee review of the hot meals programme.

Annual Standardised Tests

School testing will take place for Senior Infants – 6th classes from Tuesday 19th May to Thursday 21st May. Please ensure, if at all possible, that your child/children are in school on these days. It will not be possible to retest children who are absent on holiday for these dates.

School Calendar for next year

The school calendar for next year has been finalised at by the BOM and has been sent out to parents. It is also on the school's website.

Important Dates

While DES rules do not allow for pupils to be absent from school for holidays during term time, we know that it is helpful for parents to have key dates in mind. Please note carefully the dates at the end of this newsletter for events such as Sports Day, Standardised testing etc.

End of Term

A reminder that we will close for the Easter holidays on Friday 27th March at 11.30am for a half day. Any parents who avails of after school collection services should let their provider know about this. As with our end of term half day for the end of the first term, the infant pupils who DO NOT have any older siblings in 1st to 6th Class can be collected at 11.20am. 1st to 6th Class can be collected at 11.20am.

Wellbeing Week

We had a super Wellbeing Week this term with fruit from the PTA for all pupils, a talk on managing the 'stress bucket' for parents (see photo below), wellbeing activities and ISPPC workshops for the pupils, and some staff wellbeing activities too! Thank you to Ms. Brown and Wellbeing Committee for organising a wonderful week!



Seachtain na Gaeilge

From 16th-20th March, we'll be participating in our annual Irish Week! All classes will be taking part in extra Irish activities and lots of fun and games 'as Gaeilge' over the week and we will all be trying our best to use the Irish Language as much as we can during the whole day! We will also have an award in each class at the end of the week for the pupil who makes the best effort to speak as much Irish as possible during the week- the 'Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine' award. We continue to have whole school Irish phrases each week- If you would like to join in with speaking Irish this week (or at any other time!), take a look at our Irish phrases for the month of March below! Go n'éiri libh agus bain taitneamh as! (Have fun!)

Heather MacLachlan (WNS Gaeilge Coordinator)

Frásaí na seachtaine - Mí Márta agus Aibreán 2026

Tá _____ i mo bhosca loin. (I have _____ in my lunch box)
Tá ceist agam. (I have a question.)
Abair arís é le do thoil. (Say that again please.)
Cén leathanach? (What page?)
Cad é an freagra? (What's the answer?)
Tuigim / Ní thuigim. (I understand/ I don't understand.)
Tá críochnaithe agam. (I'm finished.)



Dates for your diary:

Thursday 5th March- World Book Day

Friday 6th March- Choir at Interschools Competition, Wesley

Tuesday 10th March- School Photographs

Thursday 12th March- Cycle safety lessons start for 5th Class weekly

Thursday 12th March- Schools Quiz in Ballyroan Library. (One team each from 5th and 6th Class competing)

Monday 16th March- Friday 20th March – Seachtain na Gaeilge

Tuesday 17th March- School closed for St. Patrick's Day

Thursday 19th March- Alison Fraser Hockey Tournament for 1st-4th Classes

Monday 23rd March- Visit by Mayor of SDCC to Launch of ECO week

Soap making workshop for 6th Class and Green Committee

Wednesday 25th March- Mad Scientist workshops for 1st and 2nd Classes, Bog Workshops for 3rd-5th Classes
6th Class trip to Leinster House and National History Museum

Friday 27th March- PTA Easter Egg Hunt, School closes for Easter holidays at 11.30 a.m.

Monday 13th April – School opens after Easter holidays at 8.10 a.m.

Wednesday 22nd April- Parent talk at Wesley College on cyber safety and device and app delay- 7.30pm

Saturday 25th April- SPRING FÊTE 12-3pm

Monday 4th May – School closed for Bank Holiday

Tuesday 12th May- school closed for pupils- teacher training day 2 on new curriculum

Friday 15th May- PTA Sponsored Walk

Tuesday 19th –Thursday 21st May – Standardised Testing

Monday 1st June- School closed for Bank Holiday

Thursday 4th June – Open Morning for Parents

Friday 5th June – Sport's Day (back up day- 12th June)

8th- 19th June- Active Fortnight

Monday 15th June-1st and 2nd Class summer tour

Wednesday 17th June-Junior and Senior Infants summer tour

Wednesday 10th June- Meeting for New Junior Infant Parents

Thursday 18th June- 3rd, 4th and 5th class summer tour

Friday 19th June-6th Class full day trip to Carlingford

Tuesday 23rd June-6th Class Graduation (mid day) and dinner (evening)

Wednesday 24th June- Moving Up Day- new JI in school

Thursday 25th June –Last day of summer term- half day.