

2025-2026

Term 1 Newsletter:

Hello and welcome to of the new academic year 2025-2026! We especially welcome our junior infants and their parents into our school community as we kick off another active and exciting school term.

We begin our newsletter with a recap from last April/May beginning the Galway Theatre Group (Branar). They arrived into our school (as planned) disguised as cleaners! Together with Venus his trusted horse, the main character proceeded to put on an amazing immersive show based on the escapades of one George McNamara who lived locally as a 'Robin Hood' type character during the Penal Laws, taking from rich landlords and giving to the poor.

Staying with Branar, we also acknowledge the creative work of our third/fourth classes who were involved in a series of creative art workshops that led to the award of the *Branar Acorn Digital Flag* in recognition of their work. Our congratulations also to all our pupils past and present, to the leadership of their teachers, to parents and staff who all supported our pupils as we journeyed towards the culmination of a variety of flag renewals/awards this year mentioned in more detail below.

My thanks also to all the parents who came out to support our 'Fix-Up Day.' All manner of tools were on show during the day including sanders, paint brushes, ladders, drills and power-washers that went put work fixing door hinges, gates and gable-ends. Honest labour ensued with the outcome being a brilliant, bright and colourfully painted school fence, newly painted yard games and the addition of a colourful climbing frame to name but a few.

As May came into sharper focus, our communicants with their families enjoyed a wonderful sacramental celebration of their First Holy Communion on a lovely balmy day. All of the pupils took an active part and my thanks to Fr. Declan for presiding and making the ceremony so special. My thanks also to their teacher Ms King for all of the preparations

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completed for the day. The month of May also saw outdoor adventures and orienteering become very popular with our 5th and 6th classes participating in an inter-schools orienteering day organised on the grounds of Turlough House that was enjoyed by all.

With the improving weather, our school also explored the nearby forest and the wonder that is Kelly's Cave. Our thanks to the PA who sponsored Go Wild Forest School to assist us in gaining new insights into the riches and beauty of the natural world that is available on our doorstep. On 12th May our school took part in what we call 'Bike Day.' Each year this is organised in partnership with Mayo Sports Partnership MSP, Cunga the local cycle club and is also supported by An Garda Síochána through community policing. All had a wonderful experience and once again our thanks to Lukasz Krzywon who helped with the organisation and Ashford Castle for allowing us travel through their beautiful grounds. At the end of May, our school were out on the streets once again waving flags to support a stage of the 'Rás Tailteann' as it whizzed by in dramatic fashion on its way to Milltown Malbay.

As referred to earlier, this year also saw the culmination of a variety of extra-curricular work completed by our pupils, guided by staff and supported by our parents. In essence, this work usually entails continuous years of committee meetings, goal-setting, planning, monitoring and inspection, with the hope that this culminates in the award of the flag itself. The renewal/award of the Green Flag entitled Global Citizenship: Litter & Waste particularly fulfilling and was accepted by our committee at a special ceremony in Claremorris.

This was also a renewal year for the Amber Flag. The renewal award recognises the work done in our school on the promotion of positive mental health which plays a vital part of the educational journey for pupils in terms of looking after each other's overall wellbeing. Ongoing programmes such as Friends for Life, nature walks and other activities bring this to life in a meaningful way. Another renewal this year was for The Active Flag. As well as being active as a committee throughout the year they must hold an Active Week which was held last May. This entailed all manner of sports coaching and other physically active events that were organised by staff and the committee with the overall aim of raising the awareness, the benefits and importance of being physically active. Our Schools Sports Day is another big event in our calendar and usually occurs during this week and despite threatening showers this year a great day was had by all.

The month of June saw a variety of school tours happening with our juniors to 2nd enjoying Kingfisher Club in Galway. The 3rd/4th went to Westport Adventure Park and enjoyed all the various activities while our seniors travelled to Lough Key Forest Park in Co. Roscommon and especially enjoyed the tree-top canopy walk and then solving the team challenges presented by Boda Borg! Also in this month, the annual local Neale football blitz was an appropriate event to bring down the curtain on all of the coaching our pupils have received supported by The Neale GAA club. My thanks also to Joe Lydon for all of his coaching throughout Terms II and III.

At the year closed, we said goodbye to our 6th class and marked this with a wonderful ceremony prepared by the pupils themselves with the help of their teacher Ms Mulcahy. Over the summer we said farewell to Ms. Lenihan and Ms. Mulcahy and thank them for their hard work and dedication. We also said farewell to SNA Ms Laura Corless who is replaced on staff by Ms Lynette Heanue. Laura donated the colourful climbing frame pieces to our sensory garden and along with her years of service leaves a lasting legacy for our pupils to enjoy. Our school reopens on the morning of the 28th with a reminder that pupils are to be in by 8:50 with doors open at 8:40. Take care and we look forward to seeing you at the school gate.

Múinteoir Micheál.