

# St. Kilian's National School

Ní Neart Go Cur le Chéile

## Imlitir 4 Mí Deireadh Fómhair

---

### Pupils and Smartphones: in numbers

75% - the number of children who own a smartphone before the age of 12

97% - smartphone ownership among 12-13 year olds at secondary school

93% - the number of 8-12 year-olds with their own smart device

25% - the number of 8-12 year-olds who have experienced cyberbullying

Source: *CyberSafeKids report*, 2023

*Smartphone Survey at St. Kilian's N.S. (Infants to 4<sup>th</sup> Class).*

<i>Question</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<b>Does your child have a smartphone?</b>	65%	35%
<b>Are you concerned about your child's safety online at present or potentially into the future?</b>	74%	26%
<b>Would you sign a voluntary agreement preventing your child from having a smart phone for the duration of their time at primary school</b>	82%	18%

Online safety among our pupils has become a critical issue and it is very important that we as adults take responsibility for our children's safety online. We have a number of pupils who are very active on social media, often unsupervised leaving them very vulnerable to bullying, grooming and exposure to inappropriate content. We as teachers are now seeing the results of this in our classrooms on a daily basis. Pupils as young as 7 or 8 are using very bad language and acting out in very inappropriate ways and often showing little or no empathy towards others as they imitate what they are seeing online. Parents are rightly very concerned by what their child is hearing and seeing from other children in the yard and in classrooms.

I am imploring parents to take responsibility for your child's safety online and as a minimum do not allow your child to have phones and other smart devices in their bedrooms. Primary school children are too young to have a 'private life' online.

School staff will look at the results of our survey with the Parents' Assoc. and we will work together on a plan for our school.

**Attendance:** We are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular punctual attendance at school and that we all work together to improve this area. Parents of pupils with poor attendance during the month of September will be invited to the school to discuss the matter. We will also be tracking those pupils who continually leave early especially on a Friday!



We encourage pupils to come to school on time. We can all be late occasionally however pupils who are consistently late are disrupting the smooth running of the school. Our school opens to receive pupils at 8.40. All pupils should be through the front gate by 8.50am.

**Parent Teacher Meetings:** Parent teacher meetings for 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class will commence on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> Nov. Bookings will go live on Aladdin after mid-term break.

**Sacraments: Confirmation** Fri 12<sup>th</sup> April at 6pm in St. Kilian's Church. **First Holy Communion** in St. Kilian's Church, Mullagh on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April at 11.00am.

**Maths Week 2023:** We celebrated Maths Week in St. Kilian's last week. Maths Week once again was great fun and it included events and activities for all the pupils and even their families. There is a new Primary Maths Curriculum being rolled out presently. More information on this will be available through the newsletter over the coming months.

**Maths Trail for 1<sup>st</sup> + 2<sup>nd</sup> (Ms. Mc Govern).** We were teamed up with the children in Ms Kenny's 6th Class for our maths trail as part of Maths Week 2023. They organised an *Around The World* challenge for us. 6th class arranged

stations for us that had a physical activity and an estimation challenge. We recorded our journey in our passports that 6th Class stamped once we had successfully completed the task. It was so much fun, we really enjoyed working with the older children.



### Maths Week (Ms. Sheridan's Rang 5).

We had great fun celebrating Maths Week this year. Who knew maths could be so much fun! We engaged in daily estimation challenges and a paired maths trail with Ms. Maddison's 1<sup>st</sup> Class. We really enjoyed working with 1st Class. We explored a

variety of questions suitable for 1st Class using our school environment. It was great to be able to help this class with their maths. We were very impressed with Ms. Maddison's class, they knew lots of the answers!



We also completed a mathathon with Mr. Rowe's 5<sup>th</sup> Class. We worked in teams of four to solve a series of maths questions. Some questions were difficult and required a lot of thought. It often took us a few attempts to get the question correct. Perseverance and determination really helped our teams through the mathathon! Well done to all of the boys and girls in 5<sup>th</sup> class who took part and helped the judges. Congratulations to Maya, Patrick, Rebecca and Johnny who finished in 1<sup>st</sup> place! Thank you to Mr. Rowe for organising the mathathon.



**Book Fair:** Thank you to all the families who supported our recent book fair. The fair generated almost €2,700, 60% of which can now be spent on books for our school.

Help Us to Help Your Child at School.



This term we worked on, *I Ask How to Improve.*

*I Know I Have to Work Hard to Improve.*

Gaeilge Neamh, Bainigí triail as sa bhaile. (Try these out at home)

**Gaeilge Neamh:** Téama Bia (Food)

An bhfuil orcas ort? (hungry) Tá orcas (an domhain) orm./Níl orcas orm.

An bhfuil (ceapaire) agat le haighaigh an lóin? Tá/Níl ceapaire agam le haighaigh an lóin.

Taitníonn \_\_\_\_\_go mór liom.

Cén bia is fearr leat? Is fearr liom \_\_\_\_\_. (what food is your favourite?)

Cé acu ab fhearr leat \_\_\_\_\_ nó \_\_\_\_\_? B'fhearr liom\_\_\_\_\_. (prefer?)

Céard atá i do bhosca lóin? (lunch box) Tá ceapaire i mo bhosca lóin.

**Línte Gníomhaíochta:** Bogaigí (rithigí) ar an spota go mall.... bígí ar bhur dtapa níos tapúla....chomh tapa agus is féidir libh.



Déan(aigí) seac léimní ar feadh \_\_\_\_\_(jumping jacks).

**Ms McGovern's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class.** It's hard to believe that we are almost at our October mid-term break already! We have settled into our new classroom since returning to school after the summer break and have been doing lots of enjoyable activities. For the past few weeks our theme has been all about autumn. In art we contrasted warm and cool colours in our autumn leaf pictures, made an acorn mosaic craft and used tinfoil for printing autumnal colours onto a tree. You will see from the pictures below that we love to explore our creativity.



We are so lucky to have a beautiful school garden at the back of school and it really brings our learning to life when exploring the different seasons. Teacher set each group a challenge; one group had to find a deciduous tree, an evergreen or coniferous tree, a tree with autumn berries and signs of colour change in autumn. Can you guess which group had which task?



We love using active learning, hands-on materials and games to consolidate our learning and we have been doing lots of this in math to date. We have been exploring number, patterns in number and we even designed our own board games which we love to play in our groups.





## BOM Annual Report to Parents. 2022/23.

This is the eleventh annual report from the Board of Management of Saint Kilian's N.S., to the general parent body. Its aim is to improve communication between the BOM and parents and to raise awareness of the work of the board in line with the requirements of the Education Act.

**The Board of Management.** The board has eight members - two parents' representatives, two community representatives, two members of our teaching staff (one being the principal) and two Patron's nominees. Each B.O.M. runs for a four year term. The present board's term began in November 2019. Its term therefore ends in November this year resulting in elections to form a new board. The board presently exists as follows:  
**Parent Representatives:** Cathal Boylan, Joanna McGregor.  
**Community Representatives:** Paul Gilsean, Ailish Daly.

**Teaching Representatives:** Michelle Mc Govern, Ronan Mac Namara.

**Patron's Nominee:** Fr. Paul Prior, Brenda Monaghan

### **Child Protection**

Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection: Ronan Mac Namara.

Deputy Liaison Person for Child Protection: Breeda Kenny.

### **Officers on the Board.**

Chairperson: Brenda Monaghan

Secretary: Ronan Mac Namara

Recording Secretary: Ailish Daly

Treasurer: Joanna Mac Gregor

Maintenance Officer: Michelle Mc Govern.

Capital Projects Officer: Cathal Boylan

Safety Officer: Paul Gilsenan.

**Work of the Board.** The present Board of Management met formally on five occasions during the school year 2022/23. The board met with the Parents' Assoc. on the occasion of their AGM in October to review the work done over the previous year and plan for the year ahead.

The board ratified the following policies during the course of the year: i) New Child Protection Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment ii) Inclusion Policy iv) Croke Park Hours 22/23 v) Revised Admissions Policy as instructed by the patron vi) Homework Policy vii) Amended the Code of Behaviour viii) SNA Policy

The board through Safety Officer, Paul Gilsenan also carried out a full health and safety audit. Our Comhairle Scoile (student council) contributed to this. The board carried out its annual audit of Child Protection and Bullying. The board noted some issues with cyberbullying and has invited Zeeko to work with the pupils and parents in October 2023 on this and other related issues.

A review of the school's standardised test results for literacy and numeracy was also conducted. The school is performing to the national norms for both. The school now uses New Drumcondra Tests for literacy, numeracy and Gaeilge.

All policies are available on the school's new website,

<https://stkiliansnsmullagh.ie> or directly from the office.

The board examined and noted feedback received from parents in May on Survey Monkey. 158 parents took the time to complete the forms which reflects a very healthy level of engagement from our parent body. The feedback was once again very positive and appreciative of the good work being done in school. The criticisms were for the most part both constructive and respectful.

When asked to list our strengths, many parents wrote that the school has a warm, safe and welcoming environment. Parents acknowledged that although we recognise the importance of literacy and numeracy, pupils are also exposed to and encouraged to take part in many other curricular and extra-curricular activities from performance arts, to a wide variety of sports, cooking, nature, gardening, caring for others and the list goes on. Parents wrote that the school is well run with excellent channels of communication. Parents and pupils were both surveyed earlier in the year on the issue of homework. We have drafted a new homework policy as a result. This policy is now on our website. The board over the course of the year purchased 32 chrome books and a charging trolley. Our Wi-Fi was upgraded and we now have fibre broadband throughout the building. €8,000 was invested to bring this up to the standard required. The board also invested €6,000 to provide an outdoor classroom at the front of the school. €10,000 has been spent on providing extra storage in the building as a result of feedback received from our safety audit. Further investment included the provision of a swing set for Spraoi and the defibrillator at the front door.

Our school is a Catholic school and our ethos is very important to us. To help us celebrate and reinforce our ethos we did the following:

- Held a Remembrance Mass for our former teacher Ms. Eimear Gilroy.
- Decorated school Christmas trees, trees for November and Lent
- Followed the activities for Catholic Schools Week
- Held a prayer service on Grandparents Day
- Celebrated the different sacraments
- Celebrated school Masses in St. Kilian's Church
- We learn and sing hymns as a whole school community every week.

**Spraoi** Spraoi has 3 classes catering for 18 children with ASD. It is functioning at full capacity. We have a pre-school and two primary classes. Spraoi has a staff of 11, comprising of 3 teachers and 8 SNAs. The board would like to acknowledge the valuable work done by all associated with Spraoi.

**Staffing.** We have at present 23 teachers, 14 classroom teachers, 5 support teachers, 3 teachers in Spraoi and the principal. There are 341 pupils enrolled. The school also employs 10 SNAs, 3 bus escorts, a full time secretary, three part time cleaners and a caretaker.

The Board acknowledges the dedication and sense of vocation displayed by our whole staff every day at school. We commend their flexibility and dedication, traits which were acknowledged by many parents on their feedback forms. The board commends the school for the publication of fortnightly newsletter to parents, in an effort to improve communication between the school and the wider community.

Well done to the ancillary staff, Angela, Bridgette, Launa and Mary, who as always keep the school and its grounds very well all year round.

The board would like to thank all those who contributed to our very successful Run for Funds event which took place in June.

A special word of thanks is due to our Comhairle Scoile who worked tirelessly on behalf of all the pupils over the course of the year.

### **Attendance.**

	Enrolment	Average	Attendance	Average	%
2022/23	61,596	344	55,142	308	89.5%
2021/22	63,563	351	55,186	305	87%
2020/21	45,771	366	41,341	331	90.3%
2018/19	66,431	369	61,797	343	93
2017/18	63,571	363.3	59,050	337	93%
2016/17	64,405	353.9	60,739	334	94.3%

Our total enrolment is dropping very gradually which is in line with national trends. 37 infants enrolled in Sept 2022 followed by 35 this year. 40 pupils left from 6<sup>th</sup> Class in June 2023. We have 52 pupils presently in 6<sup>th</sup> Class. Successive governments reduced pupil teacher ratios in recent years and it now stands at 22:1. A reduction of two pupils per class will be required from Budget 2024 to ensure that Irish class sizes are brought into line with our EU counterparts. Having class sizes of 20 would enable teachers to meet the broad spectrum of needs that children are presenting with. Teachers can use modern teaching methods more effectively and spend more time with each child with smaller class sizes. The average attendance for the past year was 89.5%. We have a strong tradition of good attendance in St. Kilian's N.S. with an average attendance rate of 93.5% annually. However, we have noted a marked deterioration in attendance and punctuality post Covid. 6454 days were lost during the school year 22/23 and 113 pupils missed in excess of 20 days.

We are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular punctual attendance at school and that we all work together to improve this area.

**Finance.** The financial management of our school is conducted in strict compliance with guidelines set out by the Dept. of Education and Skills. The full set of accounts is examined by the school's accountants annually who certify that they are true. The treasurer presents up to date accounts at each Board of Management meeting. School finances are kept under strict control. The board acknowledges the valuable contribution

parents and the Parents' Association make towards helping to fund school activities. Copies of the annual school accounts are available in the school.

**Free Books Scheme.** The Free Books Scheme was introduced this year and has proven to be very successful and has made a considerable financial difference to many families. The board would like to acknowledge and thank Liz O Connell who oversaw its successful introduction.

**Ms. Gilroy R.I.P.** It was with great sadness that the board learned of the death of our teacher Eimear Gilroy on Saturday 18th February. Eimear graduated from Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, in 2007 and taught with us here in St. Kilian's, ever since. She had been on long term sick leave in recent years as she fought a courageous battle against illness. Eimear will be remembered by all her past pupils and colleagues for her immeasurable kindness, compassion, creativity and above all her wicked sense of humour. Alas, Eimear is gone from St. Kilian's however her spirit lives on.

**Conclusion.** Saint Kilian's N.S. is a Catholic primary school which strives to provide children with the basic training they need so that they will grow to be integrated members of the community and self-reliant individuals.

The BOM would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the community who actively support and assist the school in fulfilling this aim.

The Board acknowledges the excellent behaviour of the children at school. We thank them for coming to school each day ready and fully equipped for the day ahead. We are very proud of the feedback we continue to receive from post primary schools concerning the academic and extra-curricular achievements of our past pupils.



Our girls camogie team who took part in a blitz this week in Mullagh.

### **Ms. Sheridan's 5th Class**

**Alcatraz.** Over the past few weeks we learned about Alcatraz. Alcatraz operated as a federal prison for 29 years, from 1934-1963. It was located on the Island of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay.

For Visual Arts, we created models of Alcatraz Island. We began by creating the prison and some surrounding buildings using cardboard. We painted them white and once they were dry, we added features such as windows and doors using black marker.



Once our prisons were ready, we had to make the island of Alcatraz. We made the island on cardboard using paper mache. We used newspaper and glue for this step. We wanted to make our model look as realistic as possible. We discussed what the sea looks like and how the water creates ripples. To mimic this, we glued paper towel onto the cardboard, creating ridges to look like waves.



After allowing the island and sea to dry, it was time to add colour. We mixed green and brown to paint our islands. We added shades of blue to the sea.



PIC•COLLAGE

Finally, we added our prison and other buildings which we made using cardboard and painted. This was the final step of our project. We really enjoyed creating our models of Alcatraz. We're extremely happy with the final result.