

St. Attracta's Senior School, Meadowbrook, Dublin 16  
Scoil Shinsíreach Naomh Athracht, Cluain Ghlaise Áth Cliath 16



NUACHTLITIR SAMHAIN/NOLLAIG 2016 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

DEAR PARENTS,

It's hard to believe that Christmas is just around the corner! So much has been done and yet we've a lot to do before the end of term. So firstly, let me thank each and every parent who came to the Parent/Teacher meetings. We're pleased to report that we've had a near 100% turnout - all parents to their children's testament to the commitment of education and progress. May I thank you also for your overwhelming response to our questionnaire - your kind comments as well as your suggestions and concerns help us to get a picture of what we are doing well and what requires attention. Arís... go raibh míle maith agaibh!



Le gach dea ghúí,

Muireann Máirtín, Príomhoide

### RETIREMENTS

It is with the greatest sadness for us that we let you know that Mrs. Doyle has announced that she will retire at Christmastime after 36 years of service to St. Attracta's Senior School. However we are thrilled for her that she is about to begin a whole new adventure and who knows what that might bring? Ms. Cushion too will retire in December after 9 years working as an SNA in our school, working to support children with additional educational needs. We thank them both for their dedication and commitment to the children of St. Attracta's and we wish them all the very best in the future. Go raibh míle, míle maith agaibh!



### JUNIOR SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CONCERT - LATE OPENING

Those of you who have children in the Junior School know that the school will open late on Thursday and Friday morning next (the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> December) The Senior School will open at the usual time of 8.50a.m. In spite of requests from one or two parents, we cannot justify a late opening for both schools this year as two-thirds of the Senior School pupils have no brothers or sisters in the Senior School and it would mean a majority of working parents would be inconvenienced, without due notice. However, as in previous years, no child will be marked late or corrected if they only arrive to school at the later time of 10.00a.m. This will help parents who have children in both schools.



### CHRISTMAS CARDS

By now you should all have received your child's Christmas Card and we'd like to congratulate the children on their wonderful work. I'd like to thank Ms. O'Leary whose brainchild it was to create our own Christmas cards. This was primarily an opportunity to raise the profile of our pupils' artistic talents. It was also a new venture which we hope will raise some much needed funds for purchasing art materials, such as printing materials, and some of the more expensive craft materials which will be bought for whole school use.



## MATHS TABLE QUIZ

We had a wonderful maths-filled night on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November when St. Attracta's Senior School hosted a Maths Quiz for 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. It was attended by 16 local national schools and was eventually won by the 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils of St. Colmcille's, Knocklyon, with our own pupils answering tough tough questions and doing us proud!. Thanks to Mr. Kenny, Ms. Doyle and all who helped to organise the evening and to Ms. McDonagh who was MC for the night. Maith sibh go léir!



## CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS & CHAMPION DOODLERS



Congratulations to Eamonn Naughton who won our Recycled Christmas Decoration Competition and to all who took the time to enter the DLR competition. Amazing entries all round. Comhghairdeas also to Conall Coughlan, Ignacio Salto Galdon, Jane Gleeson, Naoise Proctor, Emilie Martin and Pearl Dunne, our finalists in the Google for Doodle competition this year, whose entries have gone forward for consideration. Good luck to them all!

## INTERNET SAFETY TALKS

We are big fans of technology here in St. Attracta's and so we were thrilled when we were recently awarded Digital School Status. We are also delighted when we see our pupils putting their computer skills to good use and enjoying the benefits of the internet. However, we are extremely concerned about the lack of awareness that still exists amongst a majority of our pupils and the lack of awareness of the dangers of the internet. Education is the only way to keep your children safe on the internet and that is why we organised and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. The issues talks form a part of the Parents' evening, 30<sup>th</sup> November. to come along to this talk where something new about keeping adults, we will get first-hand information on mobile and online safety. The attendance at these talks in the past has been poor, so please join us! We have sourced speakers from CyberSafe Ireland, and we believe they will bring something new to the table. Support your children and join us at 7.30p.m. on Wednesday where a question and answer session will form a part of the parents' talk. Together we can keep our children safe! Thanks to Ms. Neville for organising these pupil and parent talks.



Internet Safety Talks for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> raised by your children at these Talk at 7.30p.m on Wednesday We invite all parents, therefore, we hope we will all learn our children safe and where, as

## WHATSAPP CONCERNS

Sticking with technology, I have been asked to bring some issues to your attention in relation to WhatsApp class communications:

- Firstly, a number of teachers and parents have expressed concern about a few pupils in each class who have become careless about writing down their homework on the basis that Mam or Dad will 'check it in the evening on WhatsApp'! We believe that in the Senior School we should be training children to take more responsibility (not less) for their own homework, for remembering messages etc. and for bringing news home to you. If all this is being done for them, when exactly will they become the independent young people they are capable of being?
- Secondly, a number of parents have contacted the school to disassociate themselves from some of the more negative WhatsApp activity, including encouragement in a small number of cases to give specific responses to questionnaire items.





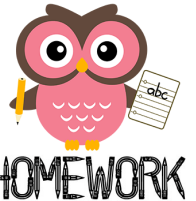
## QUESTIONNAIRES



Having said that, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who responded to our recent questionnaire. This is a very high response rate and your feedback will inform our future planning. It is only by getting your honest feedback that we can make this school we love an even better school, serving your needs and the needs of your children. So thanks a million - not

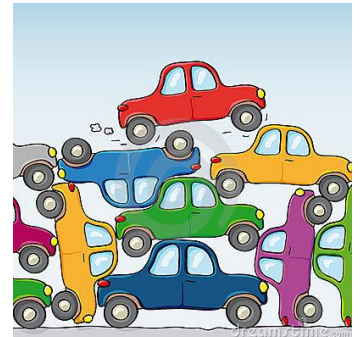
only for the lovely compliments, but also for the insightful, helpful responses we received! We will work on those! It will take some time to fully analyse the questionnaires, and a full report will issue in the January newsletter. And next year, we might computerise our little survey! In the meantime, a quick glance has highlighted two issues at this early stage.

1. There seems to be a lack of clarity in relation to how much time should be spent on homework. The full homework policy is given to parents when their pupils start in the school. It is also available on the website at [www.sasns.ie](http://www.sasns.ie). But we also have a 2 page summary which we are sending home with this letter and which we hope you will find useful.
2. There also seems to be a strong indication that a majority of parents would like to move away from the Friday treat in the Senior School. Once we have completed the full analysis of the questionnaire, we will discuss this issue at our next staff and Board meetings and report back to you. In the meantime, we have spoken to children at our weekly Assembly about how the Friday treat is optional (not compulsory) and is meant to be a small treat and not a sugar-fest. This was also highlighted in recent newsletters.



## TRAFFIC, PARKING, CONGESTION

Both Boards of Management - at their recent Board meetings - discussed the problems parents are experiencing at drop-off and collection times, but especially in the mornings. Mr. Neary and Iníon Uí Mháirtín have been monitoring both ends of the school and the use of car parks. We are also taking steps to address the issue with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and we are requesting a Lollipop Lady at the Ludford/Acorn end of the school. We believe the Gardaí are also monitoring some of the more serious issues and we are very grateful for their assistance. However, we believe many problems could be avoided by the following:



- Why not drop your children off and let them walk the last bit of the way to school (especially the older children). If they live close to the school, they could walk or cycle, especially as we have had such dry weather recently. In this way children are getting a little exercise and being a bit greener in the process.
- Please do not park on double yellow lines - not only is it against the law, but it is invariably causing an obstruction for others and creating the back-up and congestion of traffic.
- If you have to leave your car to bring your children into school, please use the empty car park spaces which are available at the swimming pool end of the school. On one morning there were 12 empty car park spaces while parents parked on kerbs and in the yellow box!

Let's all work together to sort out this very serious problem - before one of our children is seriously injured. By then it will simply be too little too late!

## CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE: MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER: 1.00pm & 7.30pm



Capture the true meaning of Christmas at our Christmas Carol Service on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December. Come along to one of our performances on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> at 1.00p.m. or on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 p.m. in the Oratory/School Hall. This is a very special night in our school year- we need everybody in the class to make up the full class choir, so we ask for a full attendance. Our Carol Service is a whole school preparation for Christmas and we would love to see all the children gathering together on this one night of the year.

## CHARITY CHAIN

No act of kindness,  
no matter how small,  
is ever wasted.  
- Aesop

A little birdie told me that St. Attracta's pupils are the kindest pupils on the planet! As part of our Kindness Counts programme, we will support many charities this year. There are so many worthy charities but we try to concentrate on charities which help children. The response to the Bóthar Coppers and Coins Appeal has been amazing and in a few weeks' time, we'll do our best for St. Vincent de Paul. More about our Charity work in our next newsletter.



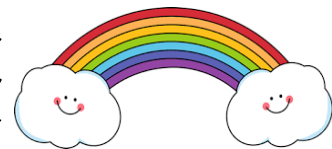
## FRIENDSHIP & ANTI-BULLYING WEEK



Welcome to our Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week. We dedicate this week to highlighting the issue of bullying and the importance of friendship for all our pupils. Each class is encouraged to talk openly or in private about any issues they may have in school or in the yard. However 90% of the serious bullying we deal with in school is cyber-bullying brought in from home. We are hoping that the Internet Safety Talks will help everybody to discuss any unsafe practice online.

## RAINBOWS FUNDRAISER

This Friday is Rainbows Colours and Fundraising Day. Ms. O'Leary's 6<sup>th</sup> class will be organising the nail painting on Friday and all children are encouraged to deck themselves out in as many colours of the rainbow as they can, literally from top to toe, so that includes hair, face, socks and all things in-between! It's usually a fun day and the funds go to a worthy cause. We encourage each child to bring in €2 - more if they like - but all children can get their nails painted, if they like, regardless of bringing in money.



## OLYMPIC HANDBALL

The best of luck to our Olympic Handballers who play their first away blitz (four matches) next week in Gormanston, Co. Meath. We have four new teams - under 11 Boys and Girls and under 13 Girls and Boys. All the best!



## WRAP UP WARM!

Please make sure your children are wrapped up well coming to school. Summer is over and some pupils are still going out to the yard in shirts and shorts! Coats, hats and scarves please!

## NEXT NEWSLETTER!



We will have one more short newsletter before Christmas outlining the Advent and Christmas Festivities, Charities etc. (and we have lots still to enjoy!) And then school will close for the Christmas holidays at 12 noon on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December and will re-open on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January at 8.50a.m.