

St. Attracta's Senior School, Meadowbrook, Dublin 16
Seoil Shinsireach Naomh Athracht Cluain Ghlaise Áth Cliath 16
Nuachtlitir na Nollag 2018 Christmas Newsletter 2018

LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH!



Join us on a very special Advent journey – where we pray for peace in our world. For the next two weeks, why not drop in to the Oratory at 8.30a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and join us for some Christmas reflections and prayers. It's only four mornings between now and Christmas, where we will pray for peace and hope in our world. Let's make this world a better place by starting our school day together in peace and in prayer.

And if you can't make early mornings at 8.30, why not pay a visit to the Oratory and take a moment as you pass by to visit Jesus in his house. Somebody somewhere needs your prayers, so invite Jesus into your hearts and remember what Christmas is all about!

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT SPIORAD NA NOLLAG

Our Advent wreath is lit in school every morning. But what is it all about? The circle of evergreen leaves stands for God's everlasting love which is without beginning and without end. The four candles - one for each week of Advent - symbolise our waiting to welcome Jesus Christ. The three purple candles stand for penance and sorrow for sin. The rose coloured candle stands for the joy of living in God's way of love. The white candle stands for Jesus' birthday on 25th December. The red ribbon stands for Jesus' blood shed on the cross for love of us. In order to fully celebrate the birth of Jesus, we will send home the Christmas schedule of Masses and Services for St. Attracta's Oratory. We especially look forward to this year's Christmas Eve Children's Liturgy at 5.30p.m. in the Oratory on Monday 24th December. The Sunday Choir will help make our Christmas Eve Mass a memorable one and we look forward to seeing you there. At this time of year, we thank all the boys and girls who read, who sing and who serve at Mass for their commitment and reliability.



THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

On Saturday 8th December, we celebrated a very special feast day, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our Lady has a very special place in our hearts here in St. Attracta's and at every assembly, we ask Mary to bless us in our work and in our play. She is such a special person because she gave us her son, Jesus Christ, whose birthday we will celebrate on the 25th December.



LUNCHES ALERT!

It has come to our attention that a lot of children are eating all of their lunch at little break and by lunchtime, they have nothing left! Can you please ensure that you have a chat with your children today to ensure that their lunches are big enough to cover both breaks. Hungry children may not have the energy for all the hard work in the afternoon, so we would appreciate your help with this. Go raibh maith agaibh!

PLEASE BEAR WITH US

Following Ms. Kiline's departure as school secretary, we have limited secretarial support between now and Christmas. While the office will be open from 8.30-9.30a.m. and from 1.30-2.30p.m., there is no secretarial support available between 9.30a.m.-1.30p.m. We thank you for your patience during this interim period and we ask you to bear with us. We hope to resume full secretarial services in the new year.

**'Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity,
it is an act of justice'. ~Nelson Mandela**

CHARITY CHAIN

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 support many charities throughout the year. There are so many worthy charities but at Christmas, we try to concentrate on Bóthar and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The response to the Bóthar Coppers and Coins Appeal has been amazing so far and on **Friday 14th December**, we'll have our Jolly Jumpers fundraiser, which will be a Christmas-themed No Uniform day for St. Vincent de Paul! Children will pay €2 to wear their Christmas colours (red, green, sparkle and whatever!) Just have a bit of fun, but don't forget, as much joy and jolly as you can manage! And of course the €2 for charity!



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS HAMPERS APPEAL

This time of year is tough for many families and we should all be grateful that whatever we have, it is more than others have. The St. Vincent de Paul Society has once again appealed to us to help families in our locality. They look after the needs of people at Christmas time. We'd like to help make Christmas special by showing a little kindness to others.



Each class is invited to make a hamper that will make Christmas really feel special for somebody in our parish. Long-lasting food items such as pasta, rice, tea/coffee, tinned fruit, soup, sugar, selection boxes, minerals, packets of nice biscuits, mince pies, cheese & crackers, bars of chocolate, hair shampoo, etc. would be most welcome. Some of these items could be added to your shopping trolley over the next week or so and the hampers will be collected on **Monday 17th December**.

A BRIGHTER CHEERIER SCHOOL!

Over the past few months, we have completed our **facelift of corridors and classrooms**, with brightly coloured noticeboards and brightly painted classrooms and lighting upgrades in 25% of the school. The Parents' Association raised a lot of money at the Summer Fair and in consultation with the children, we agreed to invest in the school environment – inside and outside – by giving it a facelift. It's a work in progress but we're getting there! The **library** isn't quite ready yet but a lot of work is going on behind the scenes and we hope that on returning to school in January, the children will be able to enjoy full use of the library once again.



HEATING PROBLEMS

Thank God for our cosy and well-insulated school! Since September, the Board of Management has had ongoing issues with the heating system. Firstly, we had no heat in classrooms (in either school) and we had to apply to the Department of Education for an Emergency Works Grant to repair the problem. In tandem with that, we had a major water leak between the two schools. No sooner were the water leak and the leak in the central heating system repaired, but we had another leak affecting the Senior School Halla and this is ongoing. So far, we have had reasonably good weather, so here's hoping! We are grateful to the Department for the first two grants – hopefully they will feel equally generous coming up to Christmas and grant us a third grant to restore heating to the hall!



FREE FURNITURE!

Round tables suitable for crèche/Montessori and 2 Teachers' Desks available free: Simply collect.

MATHS QUIZ

Congratulations to our Maths quiz team, who were absolutely brilliant, coming joint 2nd in our recent Maths Masters Competition. They were only pipped at the post by St. Colmcille's in Knocklyon, who won the tiebreaker in a faster time. Congratulations also to Oatlands Primary School, who won the Maths Quiz – for the second year running. And we hear great things about our pupils' engagement with Mangahigh – both at home and in school - it has really taken off, so keep up the good work boys and girls and have fun with Maths!



A NEW NAME FOR THE CURRICULUM ROOM



We told you recently about the refurbishment of our Curriculum Room, thanks to the generosity of one of our parents – Leo Maher. The room is now being used much more often and it's a pleasure to go into it. But we decided to re-name the room to fit its new image and we received some fantastic suggestions. And now the final decision has been made and the Curriculum Room has been re-named. It is now called An Seomra Réalta as suggested by Grace O'Kelly.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION!

Just after the mid-term, the Board of Management issued its Voluntary Contribution appeal for this school year. We now wish to clarify that all we need before Christmas is the paperwork to set up the Direct Debit forms for January 2019 onwards. We remind you that the Voluntary Contribution covers children in both schools and that the figure of €21 per month is to avail of revenue benefits as the school is a registered charity. We'll send one further reminder in January, but thanks so much for all your help to date.



CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE:

TUESDAY 18th DECEMBER 1.00pm & 7.30pm

Capture the true meaning of Christmas at this year's Christmas Carol Service, which will take place in the Oratory on Tuesday 18th December. As the whole school will be involved, places may be limited on the night. As usual, we'll have **an afternoon performance at 1.00p.m. to facilitate younger members of the family, children in the junior school and the extended family of grannies, granddads, relations and friends.**



The **evening presentation starts at 7.30p.m.** and it is advisable to be in the Oratory in good time, but **doors will not open before 7.00p.m. for the evening service.** For health & safety reasons, please keep the aisles of the oratory free to allow the pupils to go up and down to their places.

As the Carol Service will take place in the Oratory, there will be no food or drink. We look forward to a full attendance of pupils in school uniform as we all share the true meaning of Christmas through our Carol Service. It really is a very special night in our school year, so please be in the Oratory early to be sure of a seat.

Over the past few years we have had problems when children didn't turn up on the night, leaving a depleted choir to sing their class carol. If – in exceptional circumstances - your child can't come on the evening, you must let the class teacher know in writing in advance. However, 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. B'gí linn!

GALLERY VISITS

Over the past four weeks, 4th and 5th class pupils have enjoyed wonderful visits to the National Gallery in Dublin, where one of our parents – Mags Harnett – gave them guided tours and workshops. Thank you Mags for bringing art to life for our pupils!



RECYCLED CHRISTMAS DECORATION COMPETITION

Congratulations to Jane Gleeson from Ms. Nelly's 5th class, who was selected to represent St. Attracta's Senior School at the Recycled Christmas Decoration Celebration Ceremony at the County Hall in Dún Laoghaire on Friday 7th December. Her decoration received a Highly Commended award. Maith thú! Well done to all the boys and girls who entered the competition – your entries were amazing – and all out of recycled materials! All decorations will be displayed in the foyer in school.



GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

As you know by now, a new European Data Protection law, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), was introduced on 25th May 2018. This new law applies to any organisation, including St. Attracta's Senior National School, that manages and processes people's personal information. We will continue to ensure that what we do with your information is compliant with this new law. Whilst it is a work in progress, we will keep you informed through newsletters and the school website and as policies are updated and put in place.

THANK YOU! GO RAIBH MAITH AGAIBH!

This year, we will have a small Christmas raffle, with 50% of the proceeds of the raffle going to Bóthar. Raffle prizes will be most welcome! Tickets will cost 50c or 3 for €1. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your constant support of St. Attracta's Senior School and we want to take this opportunity to wish you the most blessed Christmas ever!

A FEW REMINDERS!

Keep reading! Boys and girls, don't forget to ask for a good book as a Christmas present. Keep reading and think of the peace it will give you (and others!) amid all the excitement!

We collect used stamps. As Christmas approaches, don't forget to collect stamps from Christmas cards. They're always welcome and are passed on to a worthy charity. When removing stamps from envelopes be sure to leave a good edge around each stamp. Thanks! **We also collect batteries**, so please bring in any used batteries after Christmas so that we can recycle them and follow our Green School goals.

Don't forget the Bóthar project which supports families abroad. Let's help them to help themselves to provide money for animals to be sent abroad to help families help themselves. All we ask for are any loose coins you may have. **Final collection: Wednesday 19th**

NOLLAIG SHONA!

On behalf of all the staff of the Senior School, we wish all our children a very happy, healthy and holy Christmas and every good wish for the new year.

School will close for Christmas holidays at 12 noon on Friday 2nd December and will re-open on Monday 7th January at 8.50a.m.

Beannachtaí na Nollag agus gach dea-ghuí don Athbhliain!

~ Muireann Máirtín, Príomhoide

