



ST. JOSEPH'S BOYS' BNS

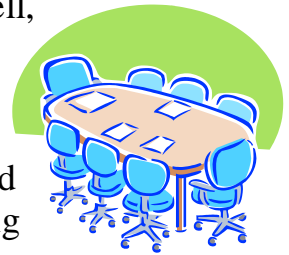
NEWS UP-DATE NOVEMBER 2008

The school will close early on Friday 7th November for a staff meeting. Junior and Senior Infants will go home at 1.00 p.m. and all other classes will go home at 1.30 p.m.

Parents' Association AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association was held on 29th September with the election of new officers and executive committee.

We extend a special thank you to all of the outgoing officers and committee members who have contributed so much to enhancing the life of our school community. Worthy of very special thanks are Ms. Deirdre Kelly and Mr. Liam Mitchell, former President and Treasurer respectively of our association. Ms. Deirdre Kelly has given 4 years of outstanding leadership and service to the Parents' Association and to our school for which we are all most grateful. During her reign as President she showed exemplary vision and leadership towards developing and resourcing ICT facilities at the school. Thank you Deirdre and we salute your wonderful work on behalf of our school. Likewise we extend a special thank you to Mr. Liam Mitchell who was Treasurer of the Association for three years. During that time Liam committed huge personal energy and time on behalf of the school and we are most grateful to him.



We welcome our new officers and executive under the leadership of President Ms. Julie Ling. We thank them for committing themselves to the many arduous and time consuming tasks for the betterment of our school community and we wish them every success and support during this school year. The officers and executive committee members make a huge commitment out of personal and family time in support of so many activities which they organise during the course of the school year.

Voluntary Contribution: Members of our executive committee were busy during the month of October organising the collection of the voluntary contribution. We want to thank all our families who have contributed to the school funds. Your contribution is greatly appreciated and so vital to the running of the school. Last year our parents contributed €42,000 to the school.



Education Cutbacks – How they may affect us.

The education cutbacks announced in Budget 2009 will impact on the school in a number of different ways.

- (1) The loss of substitute teaching cover from 1st January 2009 will mean that if a teacher is absent due to illness for one, two or three school days the Department of Education and Science will not fund a substitute teacher for the school unless the sick leave is certified. In a school of our size with 24 teachers this could mean that when a teacher is absent, a class of 30 boys may have to be divided among 3 or 4 classes – bringing class size for the days in question to 37 – 40 boys!
- (2) The raising of the maximum class size to 28 will mean that from 1st September 2009 the school will lose one teacher. The teaching position lost to the school will most likely be learning support in maths. The school has provided learning support in maths for pupils since 1980. From next September that support will be gone. The consequence will be that children who require such specialised help in maths will be denied it. It will also affect the organising of our school choirs. Mr. Donnelly and Ms. Maher currently provide cover for teachers who take their entitlement to EPV days (extra personal vacation) for which the Department of Education and Science do not fund substitute teachers. In a school of our size this can run to 40 teaching days in the course of the school year.
- (3) Grant aid to the school for resource pupils has been stopped.

It is very clear that the vulnerable children in the school will be directly affected and it is critically important that we as a school community defend their rights. The school's position has been reported to politicians of the Government and to ministers of the Cabinet and their response has been dismissive. It is imperative that we inform our public representatives of the situation as it affects the school.

Education Cut Backs Continue 2007 – 20??

The last school year (2007 – 2008) saw the introduction of education cutbacks for the primary sector with the abolition of the Summer Works Grants Scheme and the refusal of the Government to honour its commitment to the Programme of Government to reduce primary class size. The abolition of the Summer Works Grant cost the school €27,000 most of which has been provided by our parents from already scarce resources.

These cutbacks have now been severely compounded by the draconian measures announced in the recent budget and may be summarised as follows:

- (a) Class size in primary schools to be increased from September 2009.
- (b) Substitute teaching cover for uncertified sick leave to be abolished from 1st January 2009.
- (c) A ceiling of two English language teachers to be imposed on all schools.

- (d) A suspension of the implementation of the EPSON Act. (Education for persons with special educational needs)
- (e) A reduction in Traveller Education Funding.
- (f) The elimination of the Free Book Grant Scheme of €7.5m.
- (g) Abolition of grants for school libraries.
- (h) Funding for primary school buildings to be cut by 5%.
- (i) Funding for ICT in schools has been stalled if not abandoned..
- (j) Grant funding for schools with SEN pupils has been slashed.

The cuts as they affect primary education are most severe when viewed in the light of “Education at a Glance”. “Education at a Glance” contains a statistical analysis of education provision in all OECD countries. The reports over years highlight the failure of successive Governments in Ireland to provide appropriate funding for education. The proportion of Ireland’s GDP invested in education has dropped from 5.2% in 1994 to 4.6% in 2005. The current OECD average for the proportion of GDP invested in education is 5.8%. Only two countries, Greece and the Slovak Republic invest less as a percentage of GDP in education than Ireland.

The present campaign to reverse the most severe of the cutbacks needs widespread support if it is to be successful. To date 10 groups under the umbrella of The National Alliance for Primary Education – representative of parents, teachers, school management authorities, school principals – have criticised the primary education cuts as “shameful and immoral”. As a group they exhort those with an interest in education to work for the reversal of the most severe cuts. The Labour Party motion may have been voted down in the Dail on 30th October but the campaign to protect the quality of educational provision for our primary school children continues.

Book Fair: Thank you parents and boys for supporting our Book Fair. We raised €7,000 of which 60% of this money can be used to purchase books for our class libraries. Enjoy reading your books at home and remember that your book is your best friend. Anthony Horowitz, the famous author was in Dublin recently and he encouraged parents to read to their children. He said **“Parents who read to their children are sending them on their way to happiness.”** Great advice!! The Fair couldn’t have happened without the huge input and careful planning provided by Ms. Barr, Ms. Hand and Ms. Martin. Well done! (*M. Úi Loingsigh*)

Drama: On Monday 20th October the “Down To Earth” Theatre Group brought their production “Treasure Hunt” to the boys from 2nd to 5th Class. The play encouraged children to think about the magic that lies all around them and highlighted the importance of respecting the beauty of the countryside.

Football League: The Football League for 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes ended on October 8th. Having been very lucky with the weather, everything went to schedule. The 2nd class winners were Galway with Dublin coming second. The 3rd/4th Class winners were Mayo who beat Cork in a very exciting final. The medals were presented immediately

afterwards but what really excited the boys was the fact they had no homework that evening! We wish to thank the staff of the VEC Grounds for their cooperation, all the teachers and referees and, especially, the boys who provided such quality entertainment over the four weeks.

Date for your diary: The Parents' Association has organised our annual social to take place in Faughs Hurling Club on **Saturday 29^h November**. This is a most enjoyable occasion for everyone and a date to put into your diary. More details will follow.

Parent/Teacher Meetings: The meetings will take place on 2nd, 3rd and 4th December. The school will close at normal time for infant classes (1.30 p.m.) and 2.15 p.m. for all other classes.

Senior/Junior Football: The senior/junior football teams have enjoyed several exciting games against other schools. Training and matches continue.

Fire Safety Week: Our thanks to Brian McLoughlin and his firemen colleagues for taking time out to visit the school with their fire-brigade. The boys thoroughly enjoyed their visit and look forward to their return.

2nd Level Schools: The High School, Templeogue College and Terenure College process their applications while boys are in 5th Class. Application forms for Templeogue College have been issued to interested boys in 5th Class. We have received notice of the following Open Days for parents to visit the colleges:

Templeogue College	11th November from 1.45 p.m. to 3.15 p.m.
De La Salle	13th November from 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.
Stratford College	12th January at 7.00 p.m.

Number of boys from St. Joseph's who transferred to 2nd level in Sept 2008.	
Terenure College	19
Templeogue College	16
Gonzaga College	7
High School, Rathgar	5
De La Salle	3
St. Mary's, Rathmines	3
St. Macdara's Community College	2
Stratford College	1

Matt Hume
Principal

Dates for your diary

<i>Annual Social:</i>	November 29 th
<i>Parent/Teacher Meetings:</i>	2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th December
<i>Toy Sunday:</i>	14 th December
<i>Christmas Holidays:</i>	Tues 23 rd Dec at 12.00 & 12.30pm Re-open Wed 7 th January
<i>Feb Mid-Term:</i>	Closed 19 th & 20 th February
<i>Sacrament of Penance:</i>	Tuesday 10 th March
<i>Confirmation:</i>	Wed 25 th March