

Dear Parents,

It's been a bumper final term at BCNS! On behalf of all staff, thank you for your support. We especially thank parents for sharing your experience and your time whether for supervision (e.g., mobile library and movie night), sports transport (e.g., tennis matches), events (e.g., Culture and Diversity Day), fundraising (e.g., movie and raffle tickets) or our fabulous garden makeover (e.g., painting)! We truly appreciate your generosity of spirit and gift of time.

As we close our 5th year at BCNS, our school yard will fall quiet. But, the silence will be short-lived. At 88 students, our school is almost full. Our Board of Management has agreed a Class Size Policy whereby optimal class numbers are 24-25 (per room) with a lower number, ideally, for the Junior Room. Some places remain in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class for the Autumn; all other classes are oversubscribed, with waiting lists. We are a happy, healthy, thriving place of learning. Class allocations for 2023/2024 are:

- **Junior & Senior Infants: Deirdre Murphy**
- **1st & 2nd Class: Eimear O' Connell**
- **3rd & 4th Class: Lyndsey Regan**
- **5th & 6th Class: Sarah FitzPatrick**
- **Special Education Teacher (SET): Síle Cunnane**

Looking ahead to the new school year... you'll find the BCNS School Calendar on the back of this newsletter. The Calendar, Learning Toolkit for each class (which replaces the Booklist) and note on Uniform and Voluntary Contribution are all available on our website homepage.

Here, Senior Room students share updates on some wonderful events from recent weeks. Each classroom contributed favourite snapshots. Until the Autumn, happy Summer from us all!

Sarah

School Tour

By Paul, Seb and Tom

On Monday, May 29th, students from 5th and 6th class travelled about 20 minutes to the Baltinglass Outdoor Education Centre for this year's school tour! On arrival, we were greeted by Mick who led us orienteering in the forest. Then, in groups, we tried abseiling and zip-lining. Abseiling was a bit scary! The zip line was also nerve-racking, but it was great fun. We ate a hot lunch of chips and chicken goujons; it was delicious. After lunch, we changed into wetsuits, found our life jackets and walked down to the river. Our kayaks were already on the river. We hopped in... but it was freezing! Afterwards, a few of us jumped into the water; it was amazing. Archery was our last activity. It was a great day out. We totally recommend it!



Junior & Senior Infant Tour!



1st & 2nd Class Tour!



3rd & 4th Class Tour!



5th & 6th Class Tour!



6th Class Graduation

By 5th Class – Shared Writing

We celebrated BCNS Graduation on Tuesday, June 20th! We created the RSVP invitation (using Canva) and over 40 family members attended! Múinteoir Sarah shared three messages with graduates: to believe in yourself, to be the best version of yourself and to keep a growth mindset (always learning and open to new ideas). Mitzie Day, representing the PA, presented the first gifts - beautiful hand-stitched birds, she created. Mitzie explained the symbolism to students - when the balloon (on the gift-box) deflates, to remember you have wings to fly! Graduating students also received a framed origami keepsake with their school uniform, crest and year of graduation, created by Nicola Paquin. Graduates' gift bags included a white tee-shirt with their name and graduating year, created by Múinteoir Lyndsey, using her cricutter and a sharpie for autographs! Our graduates posed for photos and some changed into their own clothes, to celebrate the 'end-of-primary-school', before diving into the stunning Graduation Cake, by 'Ruth's HomeBaked Kitchen'!



Junior Infants to 2nd Class: Sports Day!

Preparing for Culture & Diversity Week!

By Makayla & Mimi

Students in 5th and 6th lead planning for 'Culture and Diversity Week' – a BCNS first! We wondered... **How diverse are we at BCNS?** Our research showed that using students' country of birth, our school was not so diverse. Most of us were born in Ireland! Our story was much more interesting when we looked at parents' country of birth; over 20 countries were represented! We wondered... **How are diversity and culture represented in art and writing?** We collected and created symbols, we created self-portraits, and we wrote poems. Then, we designed and created two large murals on fabric that Múinteoir Sarah brought in. We hung our murals on willow batons from the upstairs classrooms. They looked amazing! You couldn't tell what age, gender or colour skin, each face was. They were pretty inclusive, that way.

Culture & Diversity Day!

By Aya, MacKenna & Morolabi

We surveyed parents to find out what countries we could visit (at BCNS!) on Culture & Diversity Day (CDD), Thursday, June 15th. We created flags and country name posters, and we helped parents set-up country stands in the yard, using tables from our room. Each class had 20 minutes visiting with their passports, created by us. Students tasted delicious food from Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Moldova, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Scotland, South Africa, the USA and more! It was so cool. Loads of people came dressed in their traditional clothing. We learned about **Shalwar Kameez** - a loose trouser and shirt for men and women in Pakistan and **Agbada**, worn by people in Nigeria. We're excited to plan this celebration again next year and make it even bigger, with more music, dancing and FOOD! We most enjoyed decorating the school and of course, tasting food from different countries!

Our thanks to the BCNS PA

By 6th Class – Shared Writing

Our first Movie Night was brilliant! We loved it all, from start to finish. It's not every day you see PJs, teddies and blankets at school... or having a yard disco! On behalf of all students and staff, we especially thank Sinéad Leydon and Helena Wilson Ryan for their leadership in organising and running this great event for our school.

Garden Makeover!

By Charlie, Harry and Yaroslav
This Summer, Suzanne (SNA) and BCNS students of all ages decided to paint our previously unpainted benches and mud kitchen, in bright and bold colours such as red, yellow, green and blue. Our 5th and 6th class students watched in awe as our colourless tipi became completely transformed by the school's voluntary painters. Layers and layers of green paint were added until the tipi finally became the magical hideout the students and teachers had anticipated. (This will become a dazzling Christmas tree in December!) Benches were refurbished to appear bright and sunny. BCNS students were both impressed with and proud of their great work. They casually placed themselves on the multicoloured sides of the benches as the Junior room students joyfully played with the mud kitchen! All in the school were indeed satisfied with our astonishing work. Suzanne would like to acknowledge the incredible help offered by parents and pupils in creating her vision of a colourful play area for the children. It's now known as our Magical Butterfly Garden!



Brannoxtown Community National School (CNS)
School Calendar 2023/2024

School Day:

Drop-off:	8:40am – 8:50am	
School begins:	8:50am	
Breaks:	Snack begins at 10:30am.	Lunch begins at 12:15pm.
School ends:	1:30pm: Junior & Senior Infants	2:30pm: First to Sixth Class

Junior Infant phased enrolment:

Tuesday 29 th & Wednesday 30 th August (2 days):	9:30 - 11:00 (Bring snack only)
Thursday 31 st August & Friday 1 st September (2 days):	8:50 to 11:00 (Bring snack only)
Monday 4 th September to 15 th September (2 weeks):	8:50 to 12:00 (Bring snack & lunch)
Monday 18 th September onwards, normal schedule:	8:50 to 1:30 (Bring snack & lunch)

School Holidays:

Primary schools are open for 182 days¹

Calendar Event	School Closure Dates (Inclusive)		Re-opening Date
	From:	To:	
School begins	Tuesday 29/08/23: Junior Infants only (9:30-11:00) Wednesday 30/08/23: All students		
October Mid-Term One week closure	Monday 30 th October	Friday 3 rd November	Monday 6 th November, 2023
Winter/Christmas Break* Two-week closure	Friday (1/2 day) 22 nd December	Friday 5 th January	Monday 8 th January, 2024
St. Brigid's Day One day closure	Monday 5 th February		Tuesday 6 th February, 2024
February Break Two day closure	Thursday 15 th February	Friday 16 th February	Monday 19 th February 2024
St. Patrick's Day One day closure	Monday 18 th March		Tuesday 19 th March, 2024
Spring/Easter Break* Two-week closure	Friday (1/2 day) 22 nd March	Friday 5 th April	Monday 8 th April, 2024
May Mid-Term Four day closure	Friday 3 rd May	Wednesday 8 th May	Thursday 9 th May 2024
June Bank Holiday One day closure	Monday, 3 rd June		Tuesday 4 th June 2024
Summer Holiday*	Tuesday (1/2 day) 25 th June		

*Half-day collection: 11:50 for school bus children. 12 noon for all others.

Notes:

Common Calendar, Department of Education & Skills

- The St. Brigid's Day public holiday falls the week before February break.
- The St. Patrick's Day public holiday falls at the start of the week Easter holidays begin.
- Spring/Easter break in 2024 is earlier than usual; it begins on Friday 22/03/24.

Additional Discretionary Days, Brannoxtown CNS

- Three additional/discretionary days are added to the May bank holiday to create a mid-term break in Term 3, given the early return to school after Easter, on 08/04/24.

Learning Toolkits

In March, The Department of Education and Skills (DES) published information on the new '**Free Primary School Books Scheme**'. The scheme enables all schools to invest in new, high quality teaching and learning resources, including textbooks, for all classes. Since then, teachers have been reviewing a range of exciting and innovative educational materials, across all subjects, to expand the bank of resources for your child(ren)'s use. As part of the scheme, the DES has advised that parents may need to buy additional items for children to use at school, such as personal workbooks and stationery. A 'Learning Toolkit' has been published for each class. This replaces the 'Class Booklist' from previous years. It includes only your child's stationery (pencil case) and a minimum number of workbooks for his/her personal use only.

Further details: www.gov.ie/en/publication/933a9-free-primary-schoolbooks-scheme/

Parents will find key information for the 2023/2024 school year on the BCNS website homepage:

www.brannoxtowncns.ie

- School Calendar 2023/2024
- Learning Toolkits 2023/2024
- Note on Uniform & Voluntary Contribution 2023/2024.