

GRIFFITH BARRACKS NEWSLETTER

16th January 2020

A Chairde (Friends),

It has been another busy week at GBMDS. Yesterday I sent an email explaining the changes in how after school care will be run from next September. We also sent out a survey which has had 95 responses so far. The survey can be accessed below if you haven't had a chance to complete it yet.

[Link to Childcare Survey](#) (Ctrl + Click to follow link).

ASAs

Many thanks to all the Parents Association team who have organised the After Schools activities.

There will be a very limited number of free places available during this term's After School Activities for any families who find the cost too much. If you would like to apply in full confidence for one of these places for your child, please contact the Eddie at: eddie.fox@griffithbarracks.ie or 01 454 7278.

Please apply before *Thursday 23rd January*. After School activities begin from January 20th.

The timetable is available here

> https://griffithbarracks.ie/Content/2020/1/GBMDS_ASAtimetableJan2020_fin.pdf

Patron Planting group

You are invited to the next gardening meet up next **Tuesday, 21st January at 9am** in the Parent's Room.

We would like to discuss the following topics:

- Raised planters - Next steps / actions, planting schedule
- Sensory garden design and updates
- Rooftop garden suggestions

This should take about 15-20 minutes. Aaron Tay, Patron Chairperson patron@griffithbarracks.ie

Language Curriculum Training Half Day

There will be two further half days of training on the primary language curriculum this year. These half days will happen in all national schools across the state. **The first half day will be on Friday 14th February which is the day we break up for the mid-term break. School finishes at 12pm that day for all children.**

Below is a link to the circular which outlines the roll out of the primary language curriculum.

https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045_2019.pdf

Enrolment

Families with siblings need to make sure to send back their Junior Infant enrolment acceptance forms by January 27th at 12pm. We will proceed to our second round of offers on January 28th.

GBMDS Poetry Book

Work is still ongoing on the school Poetry Book. Watch this space in the coming months.

School Trips and Workshops Payments

We have sent a payment reminder for any outstanding trips and workshops payments. Trips and workshops are a really enriching aspect of the children's education at Griffith Barracks. Please contact me if you have any questions in relation to this.

Library update

A reminder that we will have another working Saturday alphabetising and shelving books **this Saturday 18th January from 1pm to 3pm**. We'd love as many parents as possible to help us on this day. If you think you are able to attend, contact Jenny at jenny.mccrohan@griffithbarracks.ie. Coffee and treats provided.

Junior Infants Immunisations next Monday

The school's immunisation team will be in the school next Monday. The HSE encourage parents to attend the vaccinations. Cian's class will be at 10am and Cathal's class will be at 11.15am.

When your child is aged 4 to 5 years, they are offered two vaccines:

- The 4 in 1 booster to protect against diphtheria, polio, tetanus and whooping cough (pertussis); and
- a second dose of the MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps and rubella.

For more information on the Schools Vaccination Programme please see the link below from the HSE website

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/schoolprog/4in1mmr/>

Gaeilge Volunteers Shout out

We are hoping to run Irish conversation circles in 6th class this year. We are looking for volunteers to commit 4 mornings over 4 weeks. Conversation circles are groups of 6 children and an adult conversing over 7 themes. We will have all the questions and answers ready. A basic working knowledge of Irish and lots of enthusiasm are all that is required. We did this last year with 6th class and it was really successful. If you would like to take part, contact Eddie at eddie.fox@griffithbarracks.ie – Go on, 'bain triall as' (give it a try)!!!

Reminders - Punctuality and Safety

Two reminders this week. The first is an appeal to be safe coming to and from school and to only cross the road at the designated spots. I am currently trying to get signage and a lollipop person for the school. Please mention this to all the public representatives seeking your votes in the coming weeks.

A gentle reminder that it is very important to be on time for school every morning. Lessons start at 8.50am and when you are late you miss the all-important instruction part of the lesson which makes it really hard to access if you have missed it. Everybody has days where something makes us late for school, but these should be the exception rather than the rule.

Campaign against Special Education Cuts

This campaign is being led by our colleagues in Educate Together Schools and others. We have been working on this campaign and gathering research over the last number of months. We assert that **The Right Inclusion Model for Every Child** must include:

1. **SNA (Special Needs Assistants) allocation to match the needs of the children**
2. **Transparency in the Process:**
 - There are currently not enough SNAs in the system to match the needs and the appeals process is not fit for purpose. Based on school figures we have gathered to date, of the **129** re-applications, appeals and new applications made since May 2019, **only 4** applications or appeals have been successful with 0.5 of an SNA post being granted equating to **just 0.125** per application.
 - The proposed General Allocation Model cannot match the needs going forward, given that current needs are not being met. **SNAs are being allocated by budget rather than by need.**
 - Meaningful consultation with schools, parents and children's advocacy groups is necessary to inform the right inclusion model.
3. **Multi-Disciplinary teams:** Immediate removal of waiting lists for Assessment of Need to ensure timely, appropriate access to multi-disciplinary services. This will require considerable increases in staffing and resourcing of the various services like speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, Mental Health Services etc.
4. **Options for children and their families:** To have options of placements in mainstream school, special units in schools, and special schools according to each child's needs.

Please see the attached suggested template letter for you to send to local representatives and candidates. A visit to your representative's clinic to hand deliver the letter would be even more powerful.

Please also find attached a document for recording responses to same, which can then be returned to info@kidsbehindthecuts.org to compile a national database. This document also provides you with the names and contact details of the sitting TDs in your constituency. To reach the new General Election Candidates, please email your letter directly to the political parties and ask them to forward it to the candidates standing in your constituency. Email addresses to the individual parties are in the document. This information will also be useful for when canvassers come to your door in the coming weeks.

Fun Friends and Friends for Life in 1st and 5th Classes

The children in 1st class and 5th Class have been taking part in the 'Fun Friends' and 'Friends for Life' programmes over the past few weeks. The *Friends* Programme was developed by world-renowned child psychologist Professor Paula Barrett to equip children and their families with life skills that build resilience and social-emotional strength to cope with stresses and challenges that are a part of everyday life. For more information on Fun Friends check out the links below.

<https://www.friendsresilience.org/fun-friends-ages-4-7/>

<https://www.friendsresilience.org/friends-for-life-ages-8-11/>

Skipping Day with Skip-Hop – 27th and 28th January 2020

I am delighted to inform you that we have invited **Skip-Hop** for two days of skipping on the above dates. Every child has the opportunity to take part in the workshops in which they will learn a selection of moves including individual, double-dutch, long rope, and partner skipping. The second day culminates with a demonstration of skipping skills performed by children chosen from each workshop. This workshop is funded through the trips and workshop payments and through funding from the Parents Association.

Skip-Hop has presented demonstrations to over 3,500 schools throughout the UK and Ireland, China and South America. Their aim is to encourage children and adults to skip for health, fun and fitness, whilst introducing traditional skipping games back into the school playground. The school supports these aims wholeheartedly. Further information can be obtained from their web site www.skip-hop.co.uk

The highest quality speed ropes are available for children of all ages. For parents who are interested in skipping with their children or who simply want some useful exercise themselves, there are adult ropes, family ropes and Double Dutch ropes available. Should you, your child or children require a skipping rope, they can be bought on either day or ordered through the school.

Children's ropes 2.1m and 2.5m - **€6**

Xtenders - **€3**

Double Dutch ropes 4.5m - **€15** per pair

Adult ropes 2.7m - **€8**

Family ropes 4.5m - **€10**

The School will be buying ropes for the yard so please don't feel you need to buy any ropes.

Healthy Eating Policy

This year we are updating our Healthy Eating Policy. The policy has already been discussed by the Student Dáil and the staff and next we'd love to have feedback from parents. Anita will be holding a focus group in the school on the morning of Friday 17th January. If you can attend, please email Anita at anita.dermody@griffithbarracks.ie. The group will take approximately half an hour.

Annual Bake Sale

The annual Student Dáil bake sale will take place on Thursday 30th January during school time for the children and after school for the parents. Children will need a euro or two. Baked goods can be dropped directly to the sports hall on the morning of Thursday 30th where the Student Dáil will look after them. In keeping with our green credentials, we won't be using any plastic bags, so please give your child a spare lunchbox in which to carry their baked goods. While we often have gluten free/dairy free goods, we can't 100% guarantee these products so we ask that you let your class teacher know at teachersfirstname.surname@griffithbarracks.ie if you would not like them to purchase or eat anything and we will make sure they can feel part of the event. The students will vote this week on what charity to

support. Last year it was the DSPCA. There are some excellent bakers at GBMDS and this is always a much loved and positive event on the school calendar.

Chess at GBMDS

6th Class will do a five week series of chess lessons with April Cronin, starting today. We will also host a chess jamboree with our friends from St. Catherine's NS and our students will be taking part in the Leinster Schools Chess Competition as well.

Assessment Policy and Acceptable Use Policy

Please see our Assessment Policy and Acceptable Use Policy for children attached. These policies have been worked on with all stakeholders over the past number of months and have been ratified by the Board of Management.

Upcoming events

Peace proms - Saturday 1st February
School Musical – 26th and 27th March
Parent Teacher meetings for Junior Infants - 19th May

Students of the Week



Well done to this week's Students of the Week



Open Day at St. Patrick's Grammar School

St. Patrick's Cathedral Grammar School are holding an Open Day on Friday 24th January from 1.30pm – 3.30pm. This is particularly relevant to 3rd and 4th Class parents but all are welcome.

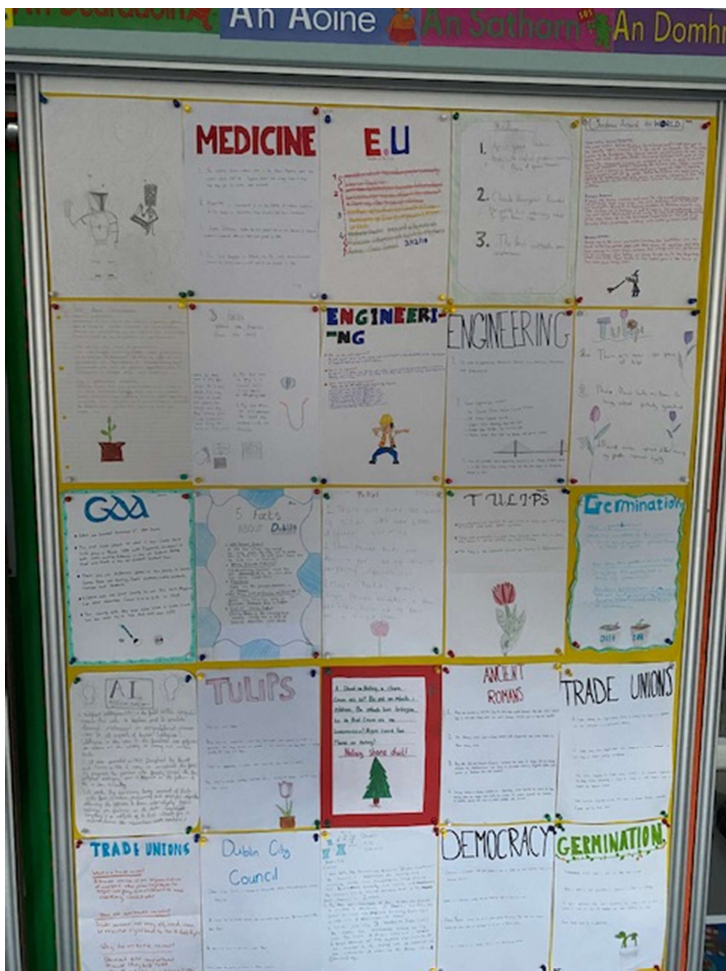
Pictures from around the school



There's always music in Junior Infants



Responding to The Nutcracker in Junior Infants Cian



Special Interest Work in 4th Class Eoin



Aboriginal Art in 6th Class

Focus on ISL

Sign languages are different from spoken languages in many ways. When using a sign language you need to remember that the movement of your fingers, hands and arms and your facial expression are very important to create meaning.

This is the Irish sign Language manual alphabet



Irish Sign Language in action in GBMDS

Beir bua,

Eddie