



# St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School Newsletter

December 2017

A thuismitheoirí agus a chaomhnóirí,

**Christmas plays:** Since shortly after Hallowe'en when scripts were circulated among the teachers concerned, the teachers and boys have been using any spare moments to practise the songs for their Christmas shows. As we approached the beginning of December, the effort ratcheted up and rehearsals on stage with light and sound became the norm. The proof of the pudding really did come through in the eating as during the penultimate week of term, the boys in junior infants and 1<sup>st</sup> classes have performed their Christmas dramas for us here, our neighbours in the other Belgrove schools and most recently for our Parents and grandparents.

**The Christmas Star:** This perennial favourite was produced by the teachers of our junior infant classes was simply magical- seeing boys who have only been in school for about 14 weeks knowing their lines, their cues, when to speak and move and most importantly how to sing out in unison was amazing. A big thank you to Róisín Bolger, Áine Duffy, Nichola Breen, Elaine Keenan, Cáit Pastourel, Vivienne Peat and Linda McGloin for the great work that went into preparing the boys for this performance.

**Do the Christmas Rock:** This is a modern take on the nativity story with some upbeat 'catchy' songs. It is based on the journey of Mary and Joseph, the three wise men and the shepherds as they each make their journey to Bethlehem. The children in the first classes celebrated the birth of the infant Jesus in a fun and exciting way. Some very quick jokes in the script too! All of the children were included in a humorous and exciting finale- which drew great applause and a loud curtain-call! A big Go Raibh Míle to Eibhilín McCaughey, Aisling Kelly, Aoife Conry, Niamh Walsh, Helen Kelly, Vivienne Peat, Tracey Traynor and Julie Morrissey.

**Carol Service:** On Tuesday December 19th, our focus shifted from our school plays to the religious aspect of Christmas when our senior infant and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes held a carol service in St. Gabriel's Church. We had wonderful singing from Senior Infants and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes, readings on the nativity story by boys across a number of classes and carol. Special thanks to Fiona Ryan, Kate Martin, Michelle Woods, Sorcha O' Grady, Maria McGuire, Ger Harvey, Ann Marie Haverty, Aoife Fox, Mary Valentine and Vivienne Peat.

Kris Sierant and Marguerite provided invaluable support to all productions with sound and lighting, publicity and co-ordination. A very special thanks to Áine Duffy Deputy Principal who co-ordinated the rehearsal schedule with Sinead Patton Deputy Principal Senior School. The hall is in huge demand by both schools: rehearsals, PE and more particularly smart moves on our side; carol service preparation and PE for the senior school.

I know that you will agree with me that the concerts and carols service are huge undertakings and are prepared in addition to the everyday teaching in the classrooms so on your behalf, I wish to thank all involved for their work with the boys in achieving the excellent standard they did.

**DVD of concert:** This year, CPD sessions recorded and produced the DVD of the Christmas concerts. I want to thank David McLean, director of the company for making this possible. DVDs are available from Marguerite's office and cost €10. Many thanks to Joanne Giles for organising this for us.

Don't forget to check out the photos of all events on [www.belgrovejbs.ie](http://www.belgrovejbs.ie) !

**Junior Infant Parent teacher meetings:** These will be held on Wednesday & Thursday January 31st January and 1st February. Teachers will be in contact through the office early in 2018 to make arrangements.

**Treats on the days of the holidays:** As a staff, we are very conscious of our responsibilities to ensure that children eat healthily in school. Parents and indeed boys are well-versed in the procedures in the healthy lunch policy and I am impressed by the variety of healthy foods in evidence in lunchboxes.

I wish to thank all Parents for adhering to our guidance on the Friday of the holidays and sending in just one treat as you would on any Friday.

**Maths Week:** This year we celebrated Maths week from the 16th to 27th October. During Maths Week (we have given it a fortnight this year), the boys have had the opportunity to have fun while exploring different areas within the maths curriculum.

The Maths Week Committee set up stations in the foyer where the boys could undertake a range of maths activities including maths trails, quizzes, dances, games.

**Sam Maguire Cup and Brendan Martin Cup:** We had a great day on December 4<sup>th</sup> when we welcomed the McCaffrey siblings Jack and Sarah to the School with their respective trophies- the Brendan Martin Cup which was won by Sarah's team last year, and the Sam Maguire Cup won by the 'other Dubs', the men's senior team. Sarah and Jack fielded an array of questions from the boys- some of which they were happy to admit they had not been asked before! Kris had put up blue bunting and we rounded off our visit with a rousing rendition of Molly Malone!!!! Active Archie, our Active Schools mascot was on hand as he has a 'politicianesque' nose for a photo opp. Jack and Sarah were happy to pose with Archie who is desperately busy doing PR for our Active Flag renewal.

**Friday morning Bootcamps:** Following on from our information meeting for Parents, the Active School Team have been holding short bootcamps on Fridays at 8:45 in the yard so boys- and staff!- get a quick burst of exercise before the day proper starts. Gavin Synott- Parent and A S Team member- calls the moves and we try and do 10 reps. of each move called. Kris as always sets up the PA so we can all hear the moves as Gavin calls them. The Team envisage the bootcamps will be a Friday morning feature for the rest of the year. A big thank you to Gavin for taking this on for the Team.

**Santa Dash:** On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December, the Active Schools Team organised our annual 'Santa Dash'. Wednesday is Dedicated astro day for Junior Boys' School and so in preparation for the 20<sup>th</sup>, Áine Duffy, AS Team Chair had prepared a rota of classes setting out the order in which each would go to the astro with their teacher and SNA. We also had a roster of volunteer Parents who accompanied the boys and supported them on the dash. Each boy did 2 laps of the astro pitch .... running roughly 1 Kilometre. Everyone returned to classes ruddy-cheeked and invigorated. The Dash and Bootcamps are important elements of maintaining awareness of the importance of physical activity in our school. Such awareness, and parental support of it is vital to our efforts to renew our Active School Flag.

**Belgrove Junior Girls' Concert:** All the school visited the Junior Girls' School for their show and we all had a great time. Well done to all.

**Patricia O' Donoghue:** The Junior Girls School concert was a swansong for Ms. Patricia O' Donoghue who retired on day of the holidays from her position as Principal of the Infant Girls School. We wish Patricia well in her retirement and wish her successor Dearbhla O' Driscoll every success.\_

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**Christmas cards:** This year, we produced Christmas cards, the proceeds of which raised considerable funds for the school. I want to thank Maureen Borresen for co-ordinating the production and printing of these. The cards raised in the order of €1,700 for the School. I think you will agree that the new format where each boy's art work is on his card is a better option.

**West Midlands November visit:** West Midland Children's Theatre visited the school with their production of "Dick Whittington" on November 27<sup>th</sup>. These visitors are no strangers to Belgrove and regaled the boys with 2 shows. The shows were most enjoyable and feedback was very positive.

**Christmas Shoebox appeal:** We would like to extend a sincere thank you to all those parents who took the time to assemble shoe boxes for our nominated North Dublin children's charity and Team Hope. It was very gratifying to see such 'buy-in' from families for these two very important charities. Boys took great pride in putting together their boxes and assembling them in a display on the bench or under the tree.

**Santa in Belgrove:** Marguerite received an email from the great man to say that despite his hectic pace of life and very busy schedule, he would pay his annual visit to Belgrove on Thursday 21st December. Parents from Mt. Prospect Avenue- and indeed Mr. Byrne in the senior school- had mentioned to me that reindeer had been seen in St. Anne's where they were eating the grass and trim the hedges. Mr. Byrne mentioned too that he had stepped on deer droppings near his front gate.... If your child was absent on the day, the gift will be kept for him until he returns to school.

**Friday 22nd December:** We had a Christmas theme and boys wore a Christmas jumper or a Christmas hat.

**Whatsapp:** My understanding is that there is a whatsapp parents' group in almost every class in the country at this stage! This social media tool is a great way for Parents to communicate on everyday issues such as lost property, parties, homework and so on. Our Parents Association met with me recently and we discussed the appropriate use of whatsapp. For matters pertaining to school administration, it is critical that correct protocol is followed. It is always best to make contact with the school office and we will deal with any query or address any concern you may have.

**Attendance:** Following the introduction of the Educational Welfare Act, the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was set up. This organisation is now known as Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. The role of Tusla is to monitor and promote attendance in schools. Each school is assigned a Welfare Officer who checks on attendance in local areas. Under Section 21 of the Act, every school is obliged to inform Tusla when a child is absent for 20 days for any reason. We are also obliged to indicate a reason for each day of absence.

**The list of reasons is:**

A: Illness; B: Urgent Family Reasons; C: Expelled; D: Suspended;  
E: Other (Religious observance, Death of student, Emigration, Holidays);  
F: Unexplained; G: Transfer to another school.

Please give your son's teacher a note when your child is absent for any reason. Your son's teacher notes are then filed and used to report the reason for the absence. If a note is not received we have to describe the absence as unexplained.

Children are expected to be present for the full day, until 13.20 for Infants and until 14.20 for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Holidays** were declared at 11.55 a.m. for Junior and Senior Infants and 12 noon for First and Second Classes, on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> and we re-open on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Don't forget to check out the photos of all events on [www.belgrovejbs.ie](http://www.belgrovejbs.ie) !

**Sign in/out book:** We ask you to come to the office to sign in if coming in late—after 9.30—or out if collecting early. We need to keep a record to show that you have collected your son early.

**Tracksuits:** Please return any tracksuit legs which we have lent to you when your son may have had an accident in the yard.

**Date for Diary:** Table Quiz—Our annual fundraiser and fun night out will take place in Clontarf Castle Friday 2nd March. If any Parent is in business and wants to become a Platinum Sponsor or if you know a colleague or friend who might be interested, please get word to the school office.

**Enrolment:** Applications for enrolment in Junior Infants for September 2018 should be made now. The closing date is 31<sup>st</sup> January next. Application forms are available from the Secretary's office or may be downloaded from the school website [www.belgrovejbs.ie](http://www.belgrovejbs.ie)

Finally, May I wish everyone in the School Community - Staff, Parents, members of the Board of Management and boys - and beyond a very happy and peaceful Christmas and may the feast of the birth of Christ enrich and renew us all.



## **Upcoming Events:**

**Yoga for 1st and 2nd Classes starts 12th January**

**Drumming starts 17th and 18th January**

**Irish Dancing starts 5th and 6th February**

**Mid-term break: School Closed 15th and 16th February.**

**School Closed Wednesday 21st February for whole school professional development seminar.**

**Dates for First Reconciliation - St. John the Baptist Church:**

**5th March at 1.30 p.m. Ms. O'Grady's class**

**6th March at 1.30 p.m. Mr. Harvey's class**

**7th March at 1.30 p.m. Ms. McGuire's class**

**Príomhoide: Mr. John O'Sullivan**

**Príomhoide Tánaisteach: Áine Duffy**

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