**NEWS SHEET 18**

A Thuismitheoirí,

Term one has been a very busy and productive one so far here in the school. I wish to compliment pupils, staff and parents for all their hard work and true diligence since September. I have shared only some of the highlights with you below along with other points of important information.

1. **New Initiative**

I am delighted to announce that our school has been accepted onto the “Food Dudes” Healthy Eating Programme. This programme aims to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables. The aim is to encourage children to try fruit and vegetables and come to enjoy the taste of the foods. They also come to think of themselves as healthy eaters who enjoy fruit and vegetables. This programme is managed by Bord Bia and supported by DAFM and the EU.

1. **Fundraising**

Many thanks to our Castlehackett Parents Association and wider school community for organising and supporting the clothing drive held recently in the school. This was hugely successful. All funds raised will be given to the P.A and will be used to support educational projects in the school. The P.A have readily supported many educational projects in the school and the pupils and whole school community are very thankful. Thanks to the staff member for organising the collection of the clothing.

1. **Card drive**

Thanks to the parents association and everyone who helped make this event the success that it was. Going to print the amount of monies raised was €**2000.** This is fantastic as all monies raised goes back into our school and benefits the children. We are very lucky to have such an active school community that constantly works towards making our school as special as it is.

1. **Coding**

Our school held Coding workshops this term and these were a fantastic success. This novel approach in teaching computational and problem solving skills was an enjoyable experience for pupils and staff alike. At Castlehackett we really try to lead the way in teaching our children these skills in a fun and unique manner.

1. **SAP Visit**

Thanks to SAP in Galway for facilitating a tremendous visit for the senior room . Through coding the kids got to make their own fitbits, did some graphic designing and got the opportunity to use Virtual Reality goggles. This was a fantastic opportunity for the children to see how their recent Coding lessons relates to the Work Place.

1. **Baboro**

Thanks to Baborò Galway for the special Drama performance held in the school recently. Please visit our Facebook page to see a sample of this unique performance.

1. **Cake Sale**

One of the highlights for the Children and everyone so far this term was our amazing cake sale held in our school. It was a brilliant example of the culture that exists in our school. A big thank you to parents, guardians, staff members and the community for helping in any way with it. Thank you also for the generous prizes given up for our raffle. We raised over 350 euro. All monies raised go to towards the purchase of school equipment and 10% of monies raised go the Galway Simon Community. This typifies the qualities we promote in our school.

1. **PE**

Thanks to the Staff and PDST for facilitating our recent PE workshop. The children had a really enjoyable day.

1. **GAA/Athletics/Rugby**

We had children in the school partake in the Galway schools cross country championship in Renmore. Congrats to all competitors. Well done to all our pupils that participated in the GAA blitzes this term. The senior room are also participating in a rugby blitz this term.

1. **Christmas Recital**

**Our daytime Christmas recital is on Tuesday the 17thof December @11am**. All welcome.

1. **Professional Development**

Many thanks to staff for attending professional development courses in Child Protection, PE, Digital Learning, Special Education Teaching and IPAD training on seesaw,coding etc.

1. **SCIENCE**

The children in the school had a great day at the National Aquarium of Ireland in Galway. This was organised to coincide with Science week 2019.

1. **Social Media**

Reminder re. Social Media over the Christmas Period : Primary school children should **not** be given access in any form to any social media platforms. Primary school children should also **not** be given unsupervised access to the internet. Parents have to supervise this situation very closely outside of school hours. Should any misconduct in this regard (by an unsupervised child in Castlehackett N.S. outside of school hours) be brought to the attention of the school authority, the parent with the concern will be directed straight to An Garda Síochána, Tuam.

1. **Our Environment**

Many thanks to Carole Reynolds (Education Officer, Connemara National Park) who will be addressing the pupils re our native birds/bats and how we can help care for them during the harsh winter months.

1. **6th Class**

We wish all our 6th class pupils well as they decide which secondary school they will be attending. Should parents need advice re transitional arrangements etc please feel free to contact the school.

1. **Health and Well Being**

We’re delighted to be one of the few schools nationally to continue to offer an individual health and well being session to all the pupils in the school. A proactive approach to bullying is the only policy consequently it’s the policy of Castlehackett N.S.

1. **Assembly**

Monthly assembly is going very well. We always have pupils share their poetry, singing, art and handwriting etc. with all the staff and pupils of the school through this forum. This component of our assemblies has rightly praised pupils for their efforts and as a result has improved their confidence.

1. **Nut Free Zone**

All staff and parents are reminded at this time of year especially that Castlehackett N.S. is a nut free zone.

1. **Book Club**

Many thanks to parents and staff who engaged with the Setanta Book Club once again. The school gets book token credits based on the size of the orders put through. Staff then select titles to improve their classroom library selection. All very good news indeed.

1. **Christmas Show Leisureland**

All the pupils in the junior and middle room (ie junior infants to 3rd class inclusive), will be going to a Christmas Play in Galway during school time on **Wednesday the 4th of December**. The children really look forward to this experience every year and well done to the staff who organise and supervise this trip so well. The P.A. will subsidise this trip to ensure it only costs €7 per pupil .

1. **Shoe Box Collection**

Over 50 shoe boxes with Christmas gifts were prepared again this year for less fortunate children in other parts of the world. Well done and mile buíochas.

1. **Christmas Annuals**

The Christmas annuals have arrived and will be circulated very soon.

1. **Gymnastics**

lessons will commence in January. Pupils can wear tracksuits on these days. The subsidised cost of these 6 lessons will be €12 per pupil. This can be paid any time after the holidays.

1. **G.A.A. Training**

All G.A.A. training by visiting coaches has stopped for the winter but the senior room will continue to be trained on Tuesdays during lunchtime for football by Mr Reilly and on Wednesdays at lunchtime for hurling by Mr Farragher. Pupils wear their uniforms and tog out in training gear and football boots for these sessions. Obviously these sessions can only take place weather permitting.

1. **Teaching Practice**

Kate Tuohy did a fantastic teaching practice in the junior room. Well done to her.

1. **Board of Management**

Congratulations to Mary Qualter and Ivan Morris who were voted onto our new Board of Management. We thank them for putting themselves forward for such important roles in bringing “a mother’s view” and “a father’s view” to Board of Management deliberations.

1. **Road Safety**

The Road Safety Authority visited our school recently and held a very informative and engaging workshop for our pupils and staff.

1. **Fire Drill**

We conducted a fire drill recently in the school, thanks to all the staff and pupils for carrying this out so professionally.

1. **After school collection**

Please ensure the roundabout is kept clear when collecting your child.

1. **Religious Education**

An evaluation of religious education will take place in the school before Christmas.

1. **Christmas Holidays**

School will close at 12 noon on Friday 20th of December for the Christmas holidays and reopens on Monday 6th of January 2020. Once again many thanks for all the support since September.

Nollaig Shona agus Ath bhliain Nua Mhaith,

Beir bua agus Beannacht,

David Reilly