



Maynooth Educate Together National School

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Maynooth, Co.Kildare

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Board of Management End-of-Year Report 2019-2020.

September and October marked the final months of the 2015-2019 Board of Management: Paul Croghan, Marie Hand, Edward Tobin, Robert Leonard, Geraldine O Kane, Jonathan Hough, Elizabeth Bracken and Mary Farrell. Paul Croghan, Chairperson of the Board thanked all Board members for their work and commitment over the four-year period, which saw huge developments in our school. Huge milestones were achieved. We were granted our permanent school building and we were permitted to enrol a second stream of pupils. We developed our IT capacity, thus ensuring that we were equipped to provide schooling at a distance during the lockdown of March to June 2020. As Chairperson of the Board, Paul Croghan, organized an election to appoint a new board for the term 2019-2023.

A new board was elected as follows...

Board of Management 2019 – 2023

Educate Together Patron Representatives:

Chairperson Paul Croghan

Elizabeth Bracken

Teacher Representatives: Marie Hand and Elaine Phelan

Parent Representatives: Carol Connolly and Jonathan Hough

Community Representatives: Geraldine Quinn and Eddie Tobin

The Board meets monthly and oversees the management of the school, in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills circulars.

The Board:

- Approved staff applications for job-sharing for the school year 2020-2021: Aimee Egan, Noreen Keane, Claire Dixon and Pat Cannon
- Accepted the resignation of Mairead McHale, SNA, and wished her success in her future endeavours.

- Worked with the Department of Education and Skills on the planning and delivery of the permanent school building.
- Approved the application to the Department of Education and Skills, for a grant to move all school furniture and resources to our new school building.
- Liaises with the Department of Education and Skills on the new school building.
- Agreed to a charity payment request from parents.
- Agreed to upgrade the school website
- Agreed to seek quotations from contract cleaners
- Agreed to the use of ancillary rooms as classrooms until the second phase of the school is completed.
- Submitted our newly-drafted Admissions Bill to patron body Educate Together.
- Sends condolences to the family of Martin Pearse, father of our school pupil, Alex, who passed away in June. May he rest in peace.
- Ratified the following staff appointments: Sinéad Maloney, permanent teacher and also Pamela Brunton, Special Needs Assistant, and Marcella Maher, to a fixed term contract.
- Approved of the Summer education programme for our special needs pupils from July 6th to July 17th.
- Annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.
- Annual review of our Anti-Bullying policy.
- Ratified the following policies: Data Protection Policy and Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
- Accepted the resignation of Naos Connaughton, and thanked him for his work in the school.
- Produced annual audited school accounts.

School events:

Internet Safety Day: This is an EU initiative to promote a safer internet for us all. It is promoted by the PDST Technology in Education and Webwise. The theme to this year was 'Together for a better internet'. Our pupils took part in Webwise and we held a poster competition for all classes.

Spelling Bee success: A number of pupils on 4th class took part in the Spelling Bee competition. Congratulations to Joe who won the local competition and progressed to represent the school in the Kildare County final.

Scholastic School Fair: This event was organized and run by the Parent-Teacher association, and was very well supported by the school community.

Engineers Week Workshop: thanks to Sharon, Intel employee, for conducting science workshops with 3rd class. The theme was Balloons. The class learned the science involved in making and launching a balloon. The children engaged in all the elements of working scientifically, i.e., observing, questioning, predicting, hypothesizing, investigating and experimenting, interpreting results, recording and communicating results.

Maths Week: Our 5th and 6th class pupils took part in Magnahigh, a game-based learning platform for primary school pupils. This web-based Maths competition sees schools compete with each other in online challenges including quizzes, games and social competitions. 13 of our pupils across both classes were awarded medals in Maths Week.

Blue Star Programme: The Blue Star programme is an education initiative for primary school pupils across Ireland. It aims to foster better understanding and knowledge of the European Union and how it affects the lives of Irish citizens. 6TH class students had just begun work on their project when lockdown arrived. As school did not reopen, this project was not completed.

Spooky Sponsored Walk: This very popular and successful annual event took place in the university grounds. A very large number of pupils and parents dressed up in their most spooky outfits and meandered through the grounds of the college before finally retiring indoors to enjoy the 5th class rendition of 'Thriller'. The PTA hosted a cake sale which was hugely supported.

Parent-Teacher Meetings: February 25th and 26th. This very important event allowed parents and teachers to discuss the progress of each child.

World Book Day and School Book Sale: on March 5th, our pupils dressed up as their favourite characters from a book. This is an annual event in the school and is greatly enjoyed by the pupils. Each year, we see a large variety of characters being promoted and this reflects the wide range of reading materials that our pupils enjoy. We also hold a second-hand book sale on this day. Children brought in from home, books which they were finished with. A large quantity of books from a great range of authors were sold in this sale. This is a hugely successful event in each school year, and sincere thanks is extended to all parents who supported this event.

School Photograph: at the start of the school year, in September, we had our Junior Infants photographed. Remaining pupils were photographed in March.

Sport Event: Spar 5-a-side tournament: Our 4th, 5th and 6th class pupils played in the FAI 5-a-side soccer tournament. We entered 4 boys teams and 3 girls teams. The children proudly represented their school, and one of our boys teams and one of our girls teams made it through to the final of the competition, which was scheduled to be played on March 31st. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 lockdown, this final did not take place.

Rugby coaching: Classes 3rd to 6th received weekly Rugby coaching from a trained coach from the IRFU.

Green Flag: A number of pupils attended a water workshop and gave a presentation about their experiences of achieving the Green Flag for water. This is a huge accomplishment for our pupils and we are very proud of them. The Green Flag committee organized and promoted Scoot to School week, which was a great success.

Active Flag: A component of our Active Flag campaign is the encouragement of the entire school community to be active. Eoin, our active flag co-ordinator, initiated a number of active events:

- Couch to 5k: Eoin organized training meetings for parents in preparation for a school run that the entire school, parents and pupils, were invited to participate in. The Park Run was due to take place in Castletown on March

28th. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 lockdown, this event was cancelled.

- In-school runs: each day all pupils took part in runs in the school grounds. These non-competitive events are hugely enjoyable with the pupils now becoming ambitious about their own personal distances and performance.

Confirmation: some pupils from our 6th class received their Confirmation on Thursday February 27th.

Primary Language Curriculum day: The Department of Education and Skills granted a one-day school closure to allow for a teachers' workshop on the Primary Language curriculum.

Seachtain na Gaeilge: all classes took part in a number of activities during Seachtain na Gaeilge. These activities allowed the children to use their Gaeilge in a fun way. The activities included: Cluichí Gaeilge, comarsáid neamhfhoirmiúil, ceol, amhráin agus damhsa, Radio na Gaeltachta, focal an lae, nuacht an lae, Tráth na gCeist. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 school closure interrupted the remaining events for the week.

First Responders Course: a number of parents who are trained First Responders gave a presentation to 5th and 6th classes on how to respond in an emergency situation, The children learned the basic techniques of CPR and they had the opportunity to act out the skill with mannequins. They were also introduced to the operations of an Automated External Defibrillator. Very sincere thanks to Maggie, Iga, Jackie and Clare for providing such a valuable course to our pupils.

School Closure and Homeschooling: The Department of Education and Skills closed schools due to Covid-19 on March 12th. We then turned to home-schooling. School books were sent home on the 12th and a subsequent book collection for parents was organised at the school. Microsoft Teams was set-up for all classes 3rd to 6th and all pupils in these classes had access. This was the medium of contact and instruction for these classes. Teachers kept weekly contact with their classes and the children have an opportunity to interact with each other, on a daily basis if needed. Aladdin, Zoom, you-tube and emails were the platforms used for our junior classes. Home-schooling continued to the end of June.

IT staff professional development: Staff availed of upskilling in Microsoft teams by means of Webinars delivered by education centres.

Acceptable Use policy and Remote Learning Charter/Digital Learning Plan 2019-2020: we updated our AUP and we drafted a Remote Learning charter. We also developed our Digital Learning Plan 2019-2020.

Education Passports: the education passports of our 6th class pupils were sent to their secondary schools.

Transition to Secondary school webinar: Parents of 6th class pupils were notified of a webinar hosted by Kildare Education Centre.

6th class graduation: Our 6th class pupils assisted their teacher Thomas, in producing a recorded graduation ceremony. On graduation evening, June 25th, 6th class pupils watched the recording with their parents and families. The Parent Teacher association distributed the graduation hoodies to all pupils. Whilst it wasn't our usual graduation ceremony, the recording marked a huge milestone in the children's lives. We wish all of our pupils success in their chosen secondary schools.

Recorded welcome for our in-coming Junior Infants: as we were unable to host our annual meetings with our new Junior Infant parents and pupils, we recorded a school visit instead. Junior Infant teachers, Angela and Liz and Marie, Principal, introduced themselves and we took a walk-through the front door and into the classroom. This gave the pupils a look at their new school. Our infants visited the school in late August, prior to enrolling.

Aladdin Connect/School reports: the school has installed Aladdin connect. The school reports were emailed to parents via Aladdin connect at the end of June.

Summer Education Programme: 11 pupils took part in our Summer education programme which was staffed by 2 teachers and 6 Special Needs Assistants. This programme was organized in accordance with DES return to work advice and all public health advice was adhered to. The programme was a great success, thanks to the great work and expertise of the teachers and staff involved.

Intel Solar Panels: Courtesy of the Intel Solar for Schools program, we now have solar panels on our school building. Intel also installed a screen on the school corridor which maps the electricity produced. These panels will greatly reduce our electricity bills over this school year. Very sincere thanks to Intel for providing us with these resources. This initiative supports the work of our Green Schools Committee.

Cycling Safety: our 6th class pupils took part in a Cycling Safety course which was run by Kildare County Council.

Transition Year students: a number of transition year students from local schools undertook their work experience in our school.

Student Teachers: a number of Bachelor of Education and Master of Education students conducted their Teaching Practice placements in our school.

Special Needs Assistants: a number of student Special Needs Assistants undertook their work placements in our ASD units.

Lockdown: Life changed for us all on March 12th, when Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced the closing of schools. We were thrown into a world of distance teaching and learning. It was all hands on deck ie teachers, parents and pupils, to get our IT platforms up and running, and also to cater for those pupils who do not have access to IT devices. Huge credit is due to the entire school community for the success of the schooling during lockdown.

Then came the return to school. Being in our new state-of-the-art school building ensured that we are well equipped with the best facilities available. In accordance with the Department of Education and Skills 'Roadmap for the safe re-opening of Schools' we put in place all that is required for social distancing, class bubbles and class pods, hand-washing, hand sanitizing, yard separations, staggered arrival and dismissal, staggered play times and safe use of resources. We employed a contract cleaning company with daily cleaning of the entire school, which, though a very costly measure, ensures that we all have a safe environment in which to teach and learn. Thus we were equipped to offer the summer schooling for our special needs pupils. This took place in July and was a great success.

In late August, our pupils returned to school. Almost without exception, the children were absolutely delighted to be back with their peers, enjoying being together in work and in play. We are all, staff and pupils, aware of the practices that we must adhere to, to ensure that we can all remain at school safely. We look forward to a safe, successful year at school.