

## **Scoil Ursula Newsletter**

### **PARENTS' ASSOCIATION:**

This is a fun and busy time of year for everyone including the Parents Association. We would be very glad of volunteers as noted below or new attendees at our meetings. Stay in touch with what we are doing by checking our facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Scoil-Ursula-Parents-Association-970193929690511/>) and as always, feel free to contact us by emailing [scoilursulapa@gmail.com](mailto:scoilursulapa@gmail.com)

- Thanks to everyone who came to our Halloween Disco! It was a huge success and a fun way of fundraising. Thanks to DJ Dáithí, to apprentice DJ Siobhan, to all the parents who volunteered, and to the teachers and staff – especially Ms McHugh – for all of their help.
- The Parents Association are extremely upset about the recent vandalism of the polytunnel. It is devastating to see the hard work of staff (particularly Ms Ryan), pupils and parents deliberately ruined in this way. The polytunnel was donated by the PA and we fund garden supplies on an ongoing basis. We hope to be able to support the school in whatever way is needed to repair the damage and ensure that it does not happen again.
- We have a Bags to School collection on Tuesday 11th December. This is a great time to clear out your wardrobe and we will be delighted to receive donations of good quality used clothing, shoes, handbags, belts and soft toys. Bags will be sent home from school closer to the date but you can get ready and use your own bags. As well as fundraising for the parents association, a percentage of money raised goes to the Laura Lynn Foundation.
- We will have our Christmas collection for Vincent de Paul on Wednesday 12th December (doing all the collections in one week!). This year Vincent de Paul have decided not to do a food collection but are hoping to collect cash so that families in need can be given vouchers to make their own food choices. So we will have a bucket to collect cash and are also looking for good-quality used toys that families can use for re-gifting. You can help by volunteering on the morning of Wed 12th Dec (8:40 to about 10am) and/or by dropping in sturdy cardboard boxes for packing toys.
- Our pupils have been hard at work on their Christmas cards and by now you will have received the sample cards. At €8 for 10 cards and envelopes, these are a great way to share the spirit of Christmas and your child's artwork with family and friends. The completed forms must be returned to your teacher by Friday 30th November. The PA will collect the forms directly from the teachers; please do not leave them to Mary's office. We are asking parents this year to use the Aladdin system to make payment; if you want multiple packets of cards, you can change the amount paid accordingly. Thanks in advance to Mary and the school for allowing money to be collected via the Aladdin system.
- We remind all parents of the need for road safety in and around the school. In particular, please do not park on the zig-zag lines beside the school or in the bus space.

And don't forget that on these dark mornings and evenings, it is very important for our children to be visible.

- Our next meeting is in the school at 8:15pm on Thursday 6th December. Please come along to give your input and ideas.
- **ALADDIN CONNECT APP:** A big thank you to those of you who have downloaded and set up the Aladdin Connect App. 75% of our families are now linked to the school using this app. We are asking those of you who haven't had an opportunity to download it yet to do so as soon as possible. Our plan is to migrate fully from text messages to App notifications by the end of the year.
- **VANDALISM:** As mentioned in the PA notes, everybody was shocked recently at the wanton destruction of our Outdoor Garden and Polytunnel, that so many people had put so much work into over recent years. The sense of hurt and outrage at such a needless and cowardly act was palpable both within the school and out into the community. We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support and encouragement from so many people and wish to thank everybody who got in touch with us and for the many offers of financial support and donations received. We are in the process of putting everything back as it was and putting in place security measures which we hope will deter the criminals from returning. We wish to thank all of you who have helped us in word and deed for your generosity and it is a great lesson for our children that out of adversity can spring hope and justice.
- **SCIENCE WEEK:** We had a very successful Science Week in the school including an experiment presentation by IT Sligo Science lecturer and Scoil Ursula parent, Stephen Daly, who came in to conduct some fantastic experiments with 1<sup>st</sup> Class and a wonderful Robot Display also by Ms Maguire's , Ms Mitchell's & Ms Keating's classes. To these and to all who participated in Science Week 2018, we are very grateful!!
- **TECHNOLOGY USE AND LINKS TO BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS:** As you know, technology use is becoming increasingly popular with children of all ages. It can be difficult for parents to monitor their children's use of technology and ensure that everything they are doing online is appropriate and safe. We in Scoil Ursula encourage children to use technology in an appropriate way to develop skills that will help them in their learning and in their life skills. We have, however, noticed an increase in the number of children who talk about playing games with a violent content such as 'Fortnite'. In tandem with this, we have also noticed an increase in the number of violent incidents at school where children in the playground have become increasingly rough and a higher number of fights and injuries are being reported than normal. There is no clear evidence that these two developments are linked but research has shown that children, who play violent games online are more likely to engage in violent acts in real life as the lines between virtual and reality become blurred and they become desensitised to violence and consequently less sensitive to the feelings of others.

We are asking parents to talk to your children about their online use and about the difference between cyber and actual reality. I would love to think that 'Fortnite', which has an age limit of 12 years, would be banned outright in all homes and that would solve one aspect of the problem. In general, we would encourage parents to monitor their children's use of technology and talk to them regularly about what is good and what is not good.

- **COMHGHAIRDEAS:** Comhghairdeas mór to Ms Mc Moreland on the birth of her daughter, Katie Jane!! We wish her long life, health and happiness!! ☺
- **SEASONAL TREATS:** A number of Christmas events will take place in the Halla in the run-up to the holidays. The timetable for families is as follows:
  - **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>, 11:45am: 6<sup>th</sup> Class Christmas Fair (Mrs White & Mr Phelan)**
  - **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>, 10:50am: Senior Infants (Ms Hoey, Mrs Kernan)**
  - **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>, 1:10pm: 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Ms Maguire, Mrs Keating & Ms Mitchell)**
  - **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:50: Junior Infants (Mrs Leahy & Ms O' Hara)**
  - **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>, 1:10pm: 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (Ms Regan & Ms O' Connor)**

All parents, grandparents, friends & relations are very welcome to come along and enjoy these events. Scoil Ursula Student Council will take up a collection of voluntary contributions to raise funds for Sligo Cancer Services and Sligo Social Services at each show. Your support is greatly appreciated.

- **SCHOOL WEBSITE:** Don't forget to keep up with school news, events and policy formation on our school website [www.scoilursula.com](http://www.scoilursula.com). You can also follow us on Facebook & Twitter.
- **DATES FOR YOU DIARY:**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Confession 2018: Thursday March 21, 7pm, Cathedral
  - Confirmation 2018: Sunday May 19, 12:00, Cathedral
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Communion 2018: Sunday June 9, 12:00, Cathedral

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Tony Gallagher, Principal.