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**SCOIL BHRÍDE,
CLANE,
CO. KILDARE.**

30th November, 2016

Sport and Fitness

Dear Parents,

Queries were raised at the Parents Association AGM with regard to the kind of sports and fitness in our school. This was discussed with Mrs. Costello before her retirement. It was decided to produce a letter to address some of the issues raised and to help parents understand what sports and activities are available in our school.

Physical Education

The P.E Curriculum is set out by the NCCA (The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment). This can be viewed online at www.ncca.ie. There are six strands in the P.E. Curriculum – athletics, dance, gymnastics, games, outdoor and adventure activities and aquatics. Each of these strands is taught at each class level at different times of the year depending on the seasons and the weather but this can vary depending on timetabling issues e.g. aquatics – when the swimming pool is available. Athletics, games and outdoor and adventure activities are usually taught in September/ October and the spring/ summer months when the weather is better. Gymnastics and dance are taught in the colder winter months when we can make use of our fabulous gym facilities.

Irish Dancing is taught as part of the dance strand. The children are taught an Irish dance each year in preparation for ‘Seachtain na Gaeilge’ when all classes participate in a céilí.

PE is taught for one hour per week as set out by the Department of Education. This can be taught in a one hour slot or two half hour slots. All schools can only do one hour per week PE as part of the curriculum. All teachers adhere to the time allocated for PE.

Sports in the school

When discussing sports that take place outside of the PE curriculum we must be mindful that teachers are giving of their own personal time to coach these teams. We are extremely grateful to the teachers involved for giving their time to coach our girls, bring them to matches and giving them a chance to participate in such a wide variety of sports.

Two teachers are involved with coaching any team for health and safety reasons.

We must also remember that when these teachers have to leave school early to bring the teams to matches, their classes need to be supervised by their colleagues. It also costs €100 for buses each time we have to bring children to an event.

It is not possible to have teams in the lower classes at present as we do not have the manpower to coach these teams. Garda vetting and finances play a huge part in providing additional coaching opportunities.

Football

Ms. Fox, Ms. Doyle and Ms. Brown coach the school football teams. We have two football teams at the moment. An u 11 team and a senior girls team that take part in the Cumann na mBunscol League. A number of years ago we were lucky enough to have Tommy Carew to help coach our girls. This was funded by the GAA. This coaching stopped when funding was no longer available. We are in contact with the GAA to see if we can avail of further coaching at this time.

The u11 team played earlier this year. They played matches against Kill, Kilcock and Maynooth. The Senior team will be playing around Easter.

The teachers are running a winter league at the moment which all children in 5th and 6th class can participate in if they so wish. There are currently 55 children involved in this.

Basketball

Ms. Cronin and Ms. Arrigan coach our school basketball team. Although we have fabulous basketball courts to the front of the school, these cannot always be used for training due to inclement weather. We have a fabulous sports hall but it isn't lined and we don't have any basketball nets. The Parents Association are working on this project for us. It can be frustrating for the girls and their coaches when they don't have any nets for shooting practice.

The girls are playing in the large schools basketball league. They also participate in a one day basketball blitz in Kilcullen Community Centre every year. The girls played two matches so far this year. They played one match against Maynooth and one match against Caragh which they won. The girls are playing well and we are all so proud of their achievements.

Hockey

Ms. Young and Ms. Brown coach the hockey team in the school. The team is made up of girls from 4th 5th and 6th class. The IHA (Irish Hockey Association) organises a competition for Dublin primary schools only, so in order to give our girls the opportunity to practice their skills and experience playing on a real astro turf pitch, Ms. Young set up a blitz for schools in the Kildare area. We would like to thank her for her continued efforts in promoting hockey in our school and the county.

Athletics

Ms. Fox and Mrs. Hennessy coach the Athletics team in the school. The school send a team to Hawkfield each year to participate in the individual and team event. All girls are encouraged to participate, but unfortunately Cumann na mBunscol only allow two teams to participate. Ms. Johnson and Ms. May have kindly volunteered to help coach the athletics this year.

Spikeball

Spikeball is volleyball for primary school children. Ms. McKenna and Ms. Barrett recently attended training on this sport. They have been in touch with the PE teacher in Scoil Mhuire about getting TY students to help with the coaching of this sport.

Camogie

This is something we hope to have in the school for the next school year. Cumann na mBunscol requires that you give a years notice that you wish to be involved. We do not always have expertise on the staff at the time fixtures are being sorted out.

Gymnastics

Leonard coaches gymnastics in the school on a Monday. Each class participates for a set period at least once during the school year.

Activities throughout the Day/ School Year

The school and various classes participate in a number of activities throughout the day/ year to promote fitness levels and activity breaks.

Sports Day: Every year the school holds a sports day. The Junior and Senior Infant classes hold their own sports day on the school grounds. For the past couple of years when the building works were in progress and since then for space the 1st to 6th class sports day has been held in the GAA.

Go Noodle: The children take active breaks between lessons – dancing to songs etc.

www.gonoodle.com

Green schools: WOW Walk on Wednesday. The class where the most children walk to school on a Wednesday are awarded ‘The Golden Boot’ for the week. Children are encouraged to walk/ cycle/ scoot to school everyday and not just on Wednesdays.

Funathon: Witch walk (weather depending whether indoor or outdoor)

Santa dash: (weather permitting) Children complete an obstacle course around the school in their Santa hats.

Operation Transformation: The children participate in the ‘Step it up challenge’.

Rith: The children participated in the Rith programme organised across the country last year. This was a national relay race that took place over 700km. Schools had to run 1km.

Céilí: The Junior Infants to 2nd class and 3rd to 6th class have a céilí each year for St. Patrick’s Day during ‘Seachtain na Gaeilge’.

Skipping: ‘Skippy John’ has come to the school to do workshops on skipping. This has led to an increase in skipping in the yard. As there is a financial cost to parents to have these workshops in the school they are not run every year.

Cycle Safety: Noel Connolly has provided cycle safety training to the school in the past. Again as there is a financial cost for parents this cannot be done every year.

After School Activities

There are a number of after school activities available in the school which parents can avail of if they so wish.

Activity	Day & Time	Contact Name	Contact Details
Irish Dancing	Tuesday 1.40 – 3.40 Thursday 2.140- 3.40 6.00 – 9.00	Angela Brien	086 6064164
Hip Hop	Wednesday 1.40- 4.40	Anne	0851599867
Ballet/ Gymnastics	Monday 4.00 – 8.00	Rebecca Flynn	087 9757640
Showstoppers	Wednesday 5.30- 7.30	Imelda	087 6013034
Playball	Friday 1.40 – 3.40	Jodie Dave	086 1619245
Tae Kwon Do	Wednesday 7.00- 8.00	Laddie	087 7646911
After School Club	Everyday	Rita	087 7500221
French Classes		Rita	087 7500221
Art	Monday	Linda Chanders	0871272622

We in Scoil Bhríde like to give children an opportunity to grow and develop by offering a wide range of activities for the students to participate in.

The following are a range of other activities that the children are given an opportunity to participate in.

Green Schools:

Ms. Stafford and Ms. McKenna run the green schools programme in our school. Our school has 8 green flags. Children from 4th to 6th class are involved in recycling, energy conservation, bird feeding, citizenship etc. The committee meet each week to discuss their plans and carry out their duties on a daily basis. The committee speak to the classes on a weekly basis about the traffic light system in operation for energy conservation. They also speak at assemblies and organise the April Spring Clean.

The Green Schools are currently brainstorming ideas for a new school garden. Work will commence in Spring 2017.

Debating:

Ms. May and Ms. McKenna coach the 6th class debating team. The girls are participating in 'The Primary Schools Debating Festival'. They had their first debate against Ardclough on the 18th of November. The motion was 'Children should be allowed televisions in their bedrooms'. The girls were opposing the motion. The girls won their first debate. They spoke extremely well and did themselves, their parents and the school proud. They will participate in their next debate on Monday in Scoil Mochua, Celbridge. The motion is 'Climate change can't be stopped'; we are opposing the motion. Good Luck.

Peace Proms:

Mrs. Maybury and Mrs. D'Arcy prepare the 5th class girls for the Peace Proms. This is an annual event where children from across the country sing a repertoire of songs in the RDS to a full orchestra.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our teachers for their commitment to the children and our school. I would also like to thank you, the parents for supporting us in each and every one of the endeavours we undertake. Thank you for all your kind words of appreciation at the recent parent / teacher meetings.

The issue was raised about children being active on wet days. For health and safety reasons, children must sit in their seats when staying in at break times. The hall is not always free to bring children to for a run around on wet days as it is heavily timetabled for PE lessons. The teachers often do go noodle breaks with the children to give them an activity break.

I hope this letter has served to answer some of the questions that were raised.

Is mise le meas,

Eimear Hennessy
Principal