

Newsletter

January 2024

Happy new year!

Welcome to the new school term and we wish you all a very happy and healthy 2024. After a much-deserved break, it's great to see everyone return to school so rested, refreshed and ready for a busy new term.

St Vincent de Paul

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has asked us to extend their gratitude for the very generous contribution of €1,316 raised by GANS families for their Christmas appeal.

Creative Schools Initiative

GANS has been chosen to again take part in the Creative Schools Initiative, a partnership between the Arts Council of Ireland and the Department of Education. We are very excited to welcome the talented filmmaker Helen Flanagan to GANS this month, for the first in a series of workshops, with our Creative School Committee. Helen will be working with the committee on a very special project – making a film! The film's concept and storyline will be led by our pupils with Helen's guidance. It will then be filmed, edited and produced for a school premiere during the last term. This is a very exciting project for the whole school and the Creative School Committee can't wait to meet Helen and get started. Last year the committee produced our stunning mural, developed with artist Aisling of Bloom the Art Project, so we can't wait to see what they produce this year.



Staffing challenges

As it has been widely reported in the media, you are no doubt aware that there is an acute shortage of primary school teachers nationwide. Unfortunately, schools in Dublin are facing additional challenges in attracting and retaining staff, due to the cost-of-living crisis. We are currently working hard to recruit additional teaching staff however, due to the shortage of available qualified teachers, this is proving more difficult than we had hoped. However, thanks to the invaluable support of our educational support team, we have managed to retain continuity of teaching for children in classes affected by the shortage. We are very conscious of the impact this loss of learning support might have – but are optimistic that this is a short-term arrangement, as we continue our efforts to recruit.

STEM grant

We are delighted to share that our application for a STEM (science, technology, engineering & maths) grant from the Department of Education has been successful. Our school is one of just 446 primary schools that has recently been awarded the grant. We are so lucky to have such curious pupils at GANS who are really interested in learning and the grant will be used to buy new equipment and resources to boost our STEM offering across the whole school.

Class crossover

We had our first class crossover recently when our Senior Infants invited Fifth Class to spend some time doing Aistear with them. Aistear is part of the junior curriculum and encourages children to learn and discover their own interests and abilities through imaginative play. The trial was a great success with both classes really enjoying the experience. Fifth Class proved to be such brilliant, patient, kind and fun buddies that they have already been invited back for another Aistear Day!



Smartphones and devices

Following Christmas, it's always timely to bring up the issue of smart phones and other internet-capable devices. While these are useful tools that can provide hours of fun and learning, there are very real dangers associated with them. A gentle reminder that mobile phones are not permitted to be switched on while on school grounds. Please speak to your child about internet safety and their use of social media at home. The computers in the school have a blocking system which blocks all social media websites, to limit access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online. The consistent advice around social media sites is that they are not suitable for anyone under the age of 13. Our anti-cyber-bullying policy can be viewed on the GANS website and for practical advice on staying safe online you might find gov.ie/besafeonline useful.

Upcoming school closures

Finally, a reminder that the school is closed for St Brigid's Day on Monday 5th February. Our mid-term break is Monday 12th to Friday 16th February (inclusive).

Latest news from the PTA

Happy New Year and hope everyone had a lovely break.

Christmas cake sale

The cake sale was a great success and raised circa €3,000. Thanks again for the wonderful baking, volunteering, donations, and congratulations to all the raffle and prize winners. If anyone brought home any tins, plates or tubs with their purchases please drop them back to the school.

Sixth Class hoodies

The hoodies for 6th class are being organised and more details to follow soon.

Upcoming events

8th February – wear red to celebrate Chinese New Year.

22nd February – Table Quiz, 7.30 pm at The Wishing Well, further details to follow. In the meantime, if anyone has any prizes to donate that would be fantastic. Please contact one of the PTA members or drop them to the school.