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February 2018

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# St. Brendan's NS

The Square, Eyrecourt, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Today is Safer Internet Day and we are sending home a booklet entitled "Parent's' Guide to A Better Internet".

Today is led by the senior classroom who won Safer Internet Day 2017. They spent the day researching the effects of using the internet and social media on mental health. They also talked to the younger classes about responsible use of the internet and setting up screen time rules with their parents.

Tonight, pupils have no written homework and their homework is to sit down with you and talk about the internet. Our suggestion is that during the week homework and Supertroopers exercises should be done before a limited time is allowed on devices. At the weekend a longer period can be allowed. From our research 2 hours per day is the maximum time recommended at weekends. We would recommend less per day during Monday-Thursday or none at all.

Yours sincerely,

*Éilís Treacy*

School Principal

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## Upcoming Events

### 14th February

12.30pm Staff Training

### 15th & 16th February

Midterm Break

### 2nd March

12:30pm Staff Training

### Monday 19th March

St. Patrick's Day Bank Holiday

### Friday 23rd March

Closing for Easter Holidays

### Saturday 24th March

Confirmation

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### Hurling Training

1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class Wednesdays during school

### Money collections:

Music

€20 for Spring Term

Swimming

€36 for 6 lessons

### Enrolment Sept 2018:

Enrolment forms for next year are available from the school office:  
Mon-Thurs 9:00am-11:00am

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## Parent's Guide to A Better Internet

A black and white copy of this publication was sent home with your child today. It is also available online to view at

[www.webwise.ie/parents](http://www.webwise.ie/parents)

We hope you find it a helpful resource in your home. Increasingly children's wellbeing, mental health and social skills are being impacted on by their time spent on screens. This guide explains and supports parents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century home.



## The Wall

Parents are no doubt aware at this stage that we have had a major health and safety issue over the past two months. On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> of December, we discovered that part of the wall separating the pitch and the playground collapsed overnight. We believe this wall originates from 1901 when the school was built. It was already an area of concern to the Board of Management and we had applied for emergency funding in 2016 to replace the wall. It was not deemed necessary by the Department of Education and we did not get the funding at the time.

We are very fortunate the wall fell when it did as no child was hurt and we had only a few days left in the term. We immediately cordoned off that area and on further inspection in January, we had to make the decision to cordon off the rest of the wall. This means the main door with intercom and safety lock is inaccessible.

Currently we are going through our insurers. After that we will be looking at applying again to the Department of Education for funding to take down the rest of the wall. This is an opportune time to develop our school further and integrate the pitch and the new field into the school grounds. Suggestions and ideas for the development of this will be most welcome when the paperwork and legalities get ironed out.

## New Child Protection Procedures

New Child Protection Procedures for schools have been developed to reflect changes to the law and the CFA/Tusla document titled *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and welfare of children 2017*. These new procedures became effective from December 2017 but schools must prepare and display a written Child Safeguarding Statement by March 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Department of Education has asked schools to close for two half days to undertake this training and preparation of the Child Safety Statement. To fill this obligation and to try and limit impact on parents we decided to close at **12.30pm** on **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February** (midterm break Thursday & Friday). We will also close at **12.30pm** on **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**.

## Swimming

We are in the middle of school swimming and the children seem to be enjoying it. We pay for pool hire and 3 swimming teachers, however we found this year that we had to employ a 4<sup>th</sup> teacher. The majority of our pupils are in the first group and there were too many for just the one teacher. The school will cover the costs of this extra teacher this year but it was an expense we did not foresee.

We seem to have a lot of nervous swimmers and anxious children when it comes to swimming in January. As a keen swimmer and lifeguard myself, here a few tips to allay any fears for next year:

1. Try to go to a swimming pool at least once every two weeks. Once a week ideally.
2. Don't worry about swimming lessons, just go to a public session and let them splash about and enjoy the water.
3. For very reluctant kids try Leisureland on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. Let them play in the fountains in the kids pool and then progress to the big pool where the floor is raised to knee deep.
4. If you're afraid of the water, learn to swim with your kids. They take a lot of courage from you.
5. During the summer Leisureland have an inflatable bouncy castle/slide set up during the public session. Again a nice way for children to play in the water and take away the fear of the structured swimming lessons. I think Athlone have something similar.

3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class will go on school tour to Bay Sports this year. Many activities are water-based but all the kayaking and pedal boats are in shallow water. The inflatable is in deeper water but the children will have life jackets and they don't have to go down the slides, they can stay on the inflatable.

I hope with these tips, all our pupils can look forward to their school tour and not be anxious about the water.