Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS, Johnstown.

NEWSLETTER

October 23, 2026.

Dear parents,
Welcome to our first newsletter of the year! As always, we had a busy start to the school year with many events taking place in the first two months. Junior Infants are already well settled into the rhythm of the school, while our 6th Classes are enjoying their responsibilities as senior students.



Sponsored Walk 2026

Thank you for your amazing support for our annual Sponsored Walk. As previously shared, we raised €8,280. All of this will go towards an outdoor playground for our pupils. The whole school is very excited about this project and are delighted that the fundraising efforts are off to such a great start. The project is estimated to cost €70,000. We would welcome contributions from anyone with expertise in this area.

STEM Week 2026

We combined 'Maths Week' and 'Science Week' into one STEM week. This took place last week. All classes engaged in many fun activities in their classrooms. We also had a whole school 'Guess the molecules in the jar', and the 'STEM Eyes' competition. Class Book Buddies became 'STEM Buddies'. It was a great opportunity for the students to learn together and from each other.



School Self-Evaluation (SSE): A Focus on the Arts, also Wellbeing and Play Based Activities.

We have chosen the Arts as a new focus for School Self-Evaluation (SSE), in line with our focus for the new curriculum. We look forward to exploring how we can further enrich our pupils' learning experiences through Music, Visual Arts, Drama and Dance. Our aim is to provide more opportunities for creativity, self-expression, imagination and collaboration, while helping every child to develop confidence and discover their individual talents.

Wellbeing Week

Wellbeing week took place from September 22-25. Our assemblies that week were based around the theme of wellbeing. There were also daily whole school reflections, in addition to many classroom-based activities. To link the theme with home, the children were assigned wellbeing homework over the week.

New 'Soft Start' in all Classes

We introduced Soft Start to our school day, with a particular focus on wellbeing, play and positive connections. This gentle start allows children to settle into the classroom at their own pace, engage in play-based activities and reconnect with their friends and teachers before formal learning begins.

A Soft Start gives children a calm, positive beginning to the school day. It helps the children to transition smoothly into school. They can choose from a range of activities such as reading, drawing, puzzles or construction. Research shows that it supports children's wellbeing, relationships and readiness to learn. This initiative links with our continued focus on play based activities.

We hope this will help create a calm, welcoming atmosphere where children feel happy, safe and ready to learn.





PE in the School

Our sport facilities include a basketball court, a GAA pitch and our school hall for indoor activities. Our PE curriculum is facilitated by a mix of our class teachers and external coaches, providing a wide range of experiences for the children, as they progress through the school. The sports that the children are currently receiving professional coaching in are as follows:

- Irish Dancing (Joanne McDonnell Irish Dancing School)
- Gymnastics (Trojan Gymnastics coach)
- Basketball (Ed Randolph)
- GAA (Cuala)

Daily Mile Challenge

Many of our classes signed up to the annual Daily Mile event in Kilbogget Park. They have been training several days a week in the yard. It is great to see such enthusiasm and improved fitness, as the students try to beat their 'PB', personal best. Unfortunately, this year the official event takes place on October 21st, the same day as mandatory training for teachers in our school. To avoid disappointment, we plan to run our own event on the athletic track in Kilbogget Park after mid-term.



Halloween Cake Sale





Thank you to all the parents who volunteered to run our Halloween Cake Sale this year. It was a great success, and we look forward to continuing parental involvement in events in the school. The cake sale is very important to us as it helps to fund our Christmas Fair.

Spooktacular Fun!





Our Junior and Senior Halloween assemblies took place on October 20th. All classes had the opportunity to perform. There was a wonderful variety of performances on the day.

Our young artists had fun creating some amazing Halloween art. The displays around Othe school added to the atmosphere and excitement.

The week finished with our Halloween dress-up and Cake Sale on Friday. Both students and teachers got involved and there were many fabulous costumes.

It has been wonderful to see everyone getting involved and helping to create such a fun and festive atmosphere. A big well done to all the students and staff for their creativity, enthusiasm and participation in making this year's Halloween celebrations so memorable.



Christmas Fair

Many thanks to all parents who have already offered to help. We are always in need of volunteers for this important fundraiser and community event. You are welcome to join our meeting on November 6th at 9am in the school.

We will soon be accepting donations for stalls. We would particularly appreciate corporate donations of high value items, for our Wheel of Fortune.

Raffle tickets will be sent home closer to the time.

Doors will open on Saturday, December 5th at 1.30 p.m.



We sincerely thank you all for your continued support and partnership as valued members of our school community. Wishing you a lovely mid-term break.

Kind Regards,

Lisa Breen & the Johnstown GNS Team

For additional news, photos and important information, check out our website www.Johnstowngns.com and our School Instagram, johnstowngirlsschool https://www.instagram.com/johnstowngirlsschool/?igsh=MWJ2MHQwOWJqc2Iw

