

Calendar of Festivals

The celebration of the festivals throughout the year is important to mark the seasonal changes and the rhythms of the earth outwardly and inwardly. This creates a further supportive rhythm in the lives of the children as they move up the school. Each festival has its own distinctive mood, and parents are encouraged to join with teachers and children in building the tradition of marking the festivals.

AUTUMN TERM

Opening festival

The whole school gathers on the first morning of term. There is a simple ceremony to welcome all the new families to the school. Children moving from Kindergarten to Class 1 are each given a sunflower and introduced to a Class 6 child who will be their Guardian for the year.

Michaelmas Festival – 29th September

Kindergarten and Class 1 to 6 celebrate St. Michael separately, each in an age-appropriate way, and each including a celebration of the Harvest table. Main school children go on a walk and return to school for a feast of soup and bread followed by apple crumble, prepared by the classes.

Halloween – 31st October

There is no official celebration, but some classes do dress up and / or organise parties on this day.

Martinmas – 11th November

Kindergarten and Classes 1 to 6 celebrate St. Martin separately each in an age appropriate way but both rooted in the same values of the traveller who shared with the poor. Once it is dark the Kindergarten celebrate with a lantern procession in their own garden at school whilst Classes 1 to 6 celebrate with a lantern procession around the school grounds while singing their lantern songs. The sharing of biscuits in honour of St. Martin ends the celebration.

Advent

The Advent Fair takes place on the Saturday directly preceding the first Sunday of Advent. This is a major fundraising event open to the public, held at the school and coordinated by parents.

On the first school day of Advent, classes walk the Advent Spiral in a specially prepared room. This is a magical moment for children and a truly peaceful start to what can be a very 'noisy' season in modern life.

From the Monday after the beginning of Advent, each week of Advent is marked with candles, songs and verses.

St. Nicholas – 6th December

St. Nicholas may visit!. Every child receives a gift of fruit, nuts and maybe even gold coins!

Christmas: Childrens and Parents Festivals

In the last week of term, Class 1 to 6 gathers and each class presents some of their work from the previous term first to each other and then, the next day, to the parents. During the Parents' Festival the children's handwork is on display in the handwork room.

Kindergarten children celebrate with their own Christmas festival which the parents are invited to attend.

SPRING TERM

St. Brigid's Day (1st February)

On this first day of Spring, the classes celebrate St. Brigid with stories and with making Brigid's crosses from local rushes. A simple feast of bread and soup is enjoyed by all.

Candlemas Day (2nd February)

Each child dips their own candle. These candles will be saved and used again at Advent.

Easter Festival

In the last week of term, Classes 1 to 6 gather and each class presents some of their work from the previous term first to each other and then, the next day, to the parents. During the Parents' Festival the children's handwork is on display in the handwork room.

The Kindergarten celebrate with an Easter egg hunt followed by an easter feast in the garden.

SUMMER TERM

Bealtaine celebrations and Maypole Dancing

For the month of May, children prepare Maypole dances which they share with family during one Friday afternoon towards the end of the month.

Pea Fair & St. John's Day (24th June)

In the morning, the children of Classes 1 to 6 invite children from Kindergarten and parents to join in activities and games they have designed and created. The currency used to participate is peas which can be obtained from the Pea Person in return for a joke or a song.

Following the Pea Fair, a picnic on the pitch allows families to come together for the lighting of a bonfire and the subsequent fire-jumping, a traditional ritual common in rural Ireland of yesteryear and in other parts of Europe. In leaping the fire we symbolically let go of the year's accumulated detritus and start the next year's cycle cleansed and afresh!

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In Kindergarten, the group going up to Class 1 are celebrated by the presentation of Golden Keys. On the last day of the school year, each child moves up to their new class for the final afternoon. This gives everyone the chance to get to know their up and coming class group and physical environment. In doing so, any anxiety, particularly in the lower class groups is dispelled before the summer, leaving the children free to enjoy their break.

Graduation

On the Monday evening of the final week, Class 6 students celebrate their Graduation with a celebration of their life at school and their own personal talents. This is a unique opportunity for the children of Class 6 to say an intimate goodbye to the school and their class peers.

Childrens and Parents End-of-Year Festivals

Classes 1 to 6 gather and each class presents some of their work from the previous term first to each other and then, the next day, to the parents. During the Parents' Festival the children's handwork is on display in the handwork room.

All festivals are created by parents and teachers working together, with children participating as much as possible in the preparations. Feel free to contact teachers about festivals in which you wish to take initiative. All ideas to enhance a festival are welcome, but please bring them forward in time!