



Rathlee N.S.
Rathlee, Easkey, Co. Sligo.

December 18th, 2025

Dear Parents,

As we come to the end of a busy term, I would like to extend my thanks to our dedicated staff, whose hard work and commitment continue to enrich school life each day. Our pupils have shown enthusiasm, kindness and creativity in all they have taken on this term, and we are very proud of them. We are also very grateful to our parents and wider school community for their ongoing support. Please find below some information and a brief outline of some of the activities our school has been participating in. These activities are a very important and enjoyable addition to school life in Rathlee NS.

School Improvements

We have undertaken some important improvements since returning to school in September, including the creation of a new, dedicated storage area for Zsuzsannah's cleaning materials to ensure a safe and hygienic school environment. Our former office has also been thoughtfully redesigned into *The Den* – a sensory and quiet room accessible to all pupils, providing a calming space for emotional regulation, wellbeing support and quiet reflection when needed. In addition, the construction of a link corridor connecting the modular and main school buildings greatly improves accessibility, safety and movement throughout the school, particularly during wet and windy weather.

SNA Appreciation Day

We were delighted to celebrate SNA Appreciation Day in September, recognising the outstanding contribution of our two wonderful SNAs, Michelle Bourke and Mary Feeney. Their dedication, care and commitment play an essential role in supporting the children's everyday needs and in enriching the life of our school. Michelle and Mary offer kindness, reassurance, structure and encouragement to pupils, while also assisting teachers and contributing to the smooth running of school life. Our teaching staff were proud to mark this special day and to acknowledge the vital work they do for our whole school community.

Parents' Association

Our Parents' Association did tremendous work in organising a range of events this term, including the Halloween Draw, the ever-popular Pumpkin Competition, and our Christmas card design project. They have also organised a special guest to visit our school tomorrow! We are very grateful for their support and for the



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enthusiasm shown by all our families, from selling lines on the draw cards to encouraging the children's wonderful creativity. Special thanks also to Ms. Christina Kilcullen from Coláiste Iascaigh for judging the pumpkin entries, and well done to all pupils who took part in these enjoyable school activities.

Junior and Senior Infants Update

This term has been a busy and exciting time in the Junior and Senior Infant room. Our Junior Infants have settled in really well while our Senior Infants have been fantastic role models! We have been hard at work with our reading, writing, and festive art projects, and the children have loved learning new poems and songs in the lead-up to Christmas. One of the highlights of our year so far was our magical trip to Tubbercurry to see the show 'I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas'. The children really enjoyed their day out from start to finish, and it was a fantastic shared experience that sparked lots of happy chatter and creativity back in the classroom. We were also very busy putting together our Nativity play and practicing our songs for the Christmas Performance. As we get ready for the holidays, we are proud of all the learning, laughter and friendship that have filled our room since September and look forward to all being back together again after the Christmas break!

Maths Week

Maths Week was celebrated in our school in mid-October. We are embracing the new maths curriculum using lots of maths language, hands-on materials and exploring different strategies to solve problems while also working hard to practice and improve our operations skills. All classes had lots of fun playing maths games, solving riddles, participating in maths stations, experimenting with shape and space and taking part in maths trails around our school.

Science Week

Each classroom focused on a strand from the science curriculum during Science Week. Junior and Senior Infants investigated what happens when skittles are placed around a plate and water is added. The children observed how the colours slowly spread from the Skittles into water, creating bright rainbow patterns.

1st and 2nd Class had fun investigating light and static electricity. They used a torch to investigate whether items were transparent or opaque and recorded the results. They learned how static electricity can be caused by rubbing objects together. Finally they learned about the importance of washing our



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hands correctly by carrying out an experiment using bread and how and where it becomes mouldy!

3rd and 4th Class became light experts and discovered how shadows are formed. They even designed and made a shadow puppet theatre from recycled materials and performed shows in the classroom using handmade puppets!

Our 5th and 6th Class carried out an exciting experiment using bicarbonate of soda, vinegar and food colouring. They mixed the ingredients together and watched a colourful and fizzy reaction take place! They experimented with a variety of colours to make the mini explosions even more fun!

Science Fair

As part of Science Week, pupils from 3rd to 6th class took part in a very successful Science Fair. Each pupil prepared a science experiment at home, allowing them to explore scientific ideas through hands-on investigation and inquiry. They then presented their experiments in school to their classmates. The Science Fair showcased a wide range of creativity, curiosity and problem-solving skills, while also helping pupils to build confidence in speaking, questioning and explaining their learning. It was a highly engaging and enjoyable experience that highlighted the children's enthusiasm for science and learning.

Cross Country

Well done to our 3rd - 6th class boys and girls who participated in the Sligo Cross Country Championships held in Rathcormac in September. They trained very hard in preparation for the competition and they made our school proud on the day. Well done everyone!

GAA Coaching

The boys and girls participated in a very enjoyable block of hurling coaching sessions in September and October. They worked on their fundamental movement skills, ball skills and team play during the sessions. Thank you to Sligo GAA coaching officer, Gavin Connolly, for all his help.

Cumann na mBunscol Mini 7s

Our middle and senior classes competed in the mini 7s gaelic football competition in September at Castleconnor GAA club. They trained diligently both at school and with their clubs. The girls and boys put in very good performances against Corballa NS, Kilglass NS and Enniscrone NS.



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Physical Activity Programme

We have been delighted to partner with the Youth Sport West initiative from the Sligo Sports And Recreation Partnership over the past 6 weeks to deliver a very enjoyable physical activity programme for the pupils from 3rd - 6th class. Thanks to our coach Bernie for her weekly visits. Bernie will return after Christmas and will work with our infants - 2nd classes.

Wellbeing through Physical Activity

Since September, our pupils have thoroughly enjoyed playing and practicing with our new skipping ropes. The inclusive nature of the activities encouraged participation, cooperation and confidence among all of our pupils.. In addition, classes have been regularly engaging in the *Dare to Believe* Olympic movement breaks in the classroom, allowing pupils to re-energise, refocus and build healthy movement habits throughout the school day. Together, these initiatives have made a positive contribution to pupils' physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Scary Woods Walk

We went to Kilglass Woods at the end of October for our Scary Woods walk. The children in our school and other local schools made Halloween pieces to decorate the woods for the walk and there were some very spooky creations! Thank you to Pamela Tuffy and all the staff at Kilglass House for facilitating this event.

Creative Schools

Our school is delighted that we have been successfully accepted into the Creative Schools Initiative, a national Arts Council programme designed to place creativity at the heart of school life. As part of this initiative, our Creative Schools Practitioner visited the pupils in October and engaged them in lively discussions about the kinds of creative experiences they would like to explore. The children shared ideas and preferences across drama, art, and music, helping to shape a two-year plan of activities that will enrich their learning and allow them to express themselves in new and exciting ways. This partnership will support us in developing a vibrant, creative culture throughout the school community.

Blue Raincoat Theatre - Drama Workshop

We were delighted to welcome Orla McSharry and Aisling Mannion from the Blue Raincoat Theatre in Sligo to our school before the mid-term break. Our 3rd - 6th classes took part in a very enjoyable drama workshop where they



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roleplayed different characters for a play that the Blue Raincoat Theatre are currently developing.

Catechist Visit

Catechist for the Killala Diocese, Patricia Newman visited all our classrooms in our school in early October. Each class sang a hymn and spoke to Patricia about our faith formation programme "Grow In Love".

Sacramental Preparation

Our 2nd class participated in two "Do This In Memory" masses in preparation for receiving the sacrament of First Holy Communion in May 2026. Thank you to Ms.Lavelle and Fr. Joseph for all their hard work as the children continue their preparations.

National Museum Of Ireland Workshop - History

5th and 6th Class took part in an engaging live online workshop with the National Museum of Ireland in early November, led by Diarmuid Bolger from Collins Barracks. Pupils explored a range of fascinating historical artefacts, examining and comparing them to develop a deeper understanding of Ireland's past. The session linked directly with the History curriculum, allowing children to think like historians as they discussed evidence, drew conclusions and asked thoughtful questions.

Christmas Trips

Our pupils enjoyed a wonderful range of Christmas outings this year, all made possible thanks to the hard work and generosity of our Parents' Association, who subsidised the trips through the return-plastic-bottle scheme. Our Infants loved their visit to Tubbercurry Town Hall to see *I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas*, 1st-4th classes were captivated by the Hawkswell Theatre's production of *Glitchmas*, and our 5th and 6th classes had a fantastic time ice skating in Sligo. **We encourage families to hold onto their plastic bottles over the Christmas break and donate them to the school in January so we can continue providing these valuable experiences for all our children.**

Christmas Concert

Our annual Christmas Nativity play and concert took place on Tuesday the 16th in the Star Of The Sea Church, Rathlee. Once again the children in our school did themselves proud by putting on an excellent performance. Thank you to all our teachers for their outstanding work in preparing for the concert and to all



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our other staff for their help in preparing for the day. Thank you also to Fr. Joseph for facilitating our performance in the church.

School Charities

At this time of year, it is very important for us to think about the less fortunate. Thank you to everyone who contributed to two worthy causes: our St. Vincent De Paul appeal and the Red Cross Gaza Children appeal.

School Website and Blog

Don't forget to keep an eye on our school website and blog at www.rathleenns.ie for school news and updates of school activities. We can also be followed on X (formerly Twitter) @rathleeS and on Facebook.

Pupil Insurance 24 Hour Covered

Thank you to all parents for the voluntary contribution that you make to support our school. Part of the contribution is used by the school to pay the insurance fee charged by Allianz so that all children in the school have 24 hour insurance cover through the Allianz Scheme.

School Policies

Our Board of Management has recently ratified the following policies:

- Bí Cinéalta (anti-bullying policy)
- Smart Device Voluntary Code
- DEIS Plan
- INTO Parental Complaints Procedure
- INTO/CPSMA Working Together Document
- Child Safeguarding Statement has also taken place.

Please contact the school office if you would like to view any of these policies.



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School Calendar (January - June 2026)

Re-opening on Monday 5th January

School will be closed on the following dates:

Monday 2nd February Bank Holiday	St. Brigid's Day
Wednesday February 4th Curriculum - staff training - Day 1.	Primary
Thurs. 19th February Fri. 20th February.	Mid-Term Break (Re-opening on Mon. 23 rd February)
Tuesday 17th March Day Bank Holiday	Closed. - St. Patrick's
Monday 30th March until (closing Fri. 27 th March Friday 10th April 13 th April).	Easter Holidays - Re-opening on Monday 13 th April).
Mon. 4th May	Bank Holiday.
Wednesday, 6th May Curriculum - staff training - Day 2.	Primary
Mon. 1st June	Bank Holiday

Summer Holidays - closing on Friday 19th June, 2026

Finally, on behalf of all the staff in Rathlee NS, I would like to thank you for your continuing support and wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

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James Rafter

Príomhoide