**Ballymoney National School,**

**Ballineen,**

**Co. Cork.**

**Phone: 023-8847583**

 **21st January 2022**

**Dear Parents,**

**Bangers and Crash Percussion Group**

On Tuesday 25th January, we are delighted that Bangers and Crash Percussion group will visit the school to perform an outdoor music concert for the whole school. The cost of this concert will be funded by your Additional Activities Payment. The performers will begin by explaining what percussion instruments are and where they originate. The students will discover the basic foundations of music such as pulse, dynamics and rhythm by direct participation in various games and exercises that include call and response, passing rhythms and using various sounds to create atmospheric soundscapes. The duo will perform short pieces to show these concepts and the students will regularly be invited to participate. They will also learn about the role of percussion in various ensembles such as the orchestra, marching bands and rock / pop bands, and will see how some of the most recognisable sounds in movies and cartoons are created by percussion instruments.

This concert will go ahead regardless of the weather. Please send your children to school with extra warm clothes next Tuesday, e.g. hats, scarves, gloves, waterproof trousers or a blanket for their legs.

**Clothes Collection**

A number of parents enquired about a fundraising clothes collection. Our next clothes collection will take place on Friday the 18th February. Donations can be left in the shelter from Monday 14th February. They accept clothing, curtains, towels, sheets, paired shoes, handbags, belts, blankets and soft toys. They do not accept duvets and pillows.

**School Transport Survey**

You may be aware that the Department is in the process of conducting a review of the School Transport Scheme. The review encompasses the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs and the Primary and Post Primary School Transport Schemes. The review is being conducted with a view to examining the current scheme, its broader effectiveness and sustainability and to ensure that it serves students and their families adequately. As part of their review, parents are being surveyed for their views. You can complete a survey and contribute your submissions by 4th February. The survey can be found at <https://dessurveys.education.gov.ie/surveys/parent-and-guardian-school-transport-survey>

**Parent Teacher Meetings**

Unfortunately we are not permitted to hold face to face meetings this year. You have all been emailed an appointment time for a phonecall with your child's class teacher. Please note that these are the official parent teacher meetings but we are happy to talk to you again throughout the year if you have any queries, concerns or you just want an update on your child's progress.

**BLAST Arts Project**

We applied for a grant for a BLAST artist in residence through the West Cork Education Centre. Clare McLoughlin, a local visual artist, has been assigned to our school. She will spend twenty hours working with the children on an arts project. This will begin on 2nd February. This is similar to the clay project that the children completed in 2020.

**Ukulele le Chéile Concert**

On Thursday the 3rd February, the pupils will perform their first ukulele concert on zoom for the other two schools participating in the 'Ukulele le Chéile' project. They have made a video about our school and will pre-record all their songs. We will have extra practices this week. Please ensure that your children bring their ukuleles back into school on Monday so that they can practise. The junior classroom has been practising playing some pieces on the boomwhackers and they will also perform at the concert.

**Changemaker Schools**

We were contacted by DCU in September to tell us that we had been nominated as a 'Changemaker School'. There are only fifteen schools in the country with this status. This year five more schools are being added to the programme and we are one of the schools that have been nominated to join the programme. Changemaker Schools are schools that are empowering young people to be changemakers.  A changemaker is someone with the skills and confidence to lead change in their home, school and community. The programme focuses on the four pillars of empathy, creativity, teamwork and leadership skills to unleash the full potential of themselves and others.

Ms. Sullivan and I were interviewed on zoom about our school in November. We then completed a lengthy application form about our school practices. The final stage is a school visit. Ms. Fiona Collins will visit the school on Friday 4th February to meet the pupils and discuss our school practices.

**Dates for your Diary**

Tuesday 25th January                                   Bangers and Crash Percussion Concert

Wednesday 2nd February                             Clare McLoughlin begins (Artist in residence)

Thursday 3rd February                                  Ukulele le Chéile Concert on zoom

Friday 4th February                                        DCU Changemaker School Visit

Friday 18th February                                      PTA Fundraising Clothes Collection