

ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



10, Annaghmore Coalisland, Co. Tyrone. N.I. BT71 4QZ

Principal: Anne Mc Guinness

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Saturday 2nd January 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope this letter finds you all safe and keeping well following a happy and relaxing but enjoyable family Christmas and New Year. Having received, what I hope for now, are clear and confirmed communications from Minister Weir, Department of Education and the Education Authority, I can now clarify for us all what the situation is regarding reopening of St Patrick's PS next week: -

- All pupils will be taught remotely from Thursday 7th - Friday 8th January 2021 (inclusive)
- Wednesday 6th January 2021 is now a STAFF ONLY day to allow staff to prepare for on-line learning materials
- All pupils are scheduled to return to school on MONDAY 11th January full time (this may change closer to the time...)

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- School will accommodate vulnerable children and the children of key workers on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January for supervised learning only. There will be no direct teaching and material given will match that online for their class. (Definition of key worker is provided at the end of this letter.)

Once again, children should only be brought into school on Thursday and Friday next week if there is absolutely no alternative care for them; home remains the safest place for them to be as it has been their secure bubble for the last 10 days.

If individual children must attend, parent must email the Principal on

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giving their child's name, class and if they are entitled to free school meals.

Children will be kept in their class bubbles and no child will be kept after their finishing staggered time.

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Please note that **staggered start and finishing times continue to be in place for this term for all pupils when they do return**, and these are more essential than ever especially with the new strain of this virus that is so highly infectious in younger people.

1. **As for Term 1**, all restrictions and routines regarding **hand hygiene, class and yard bubbles, no school bags or lunch boxes** remain strictly in place across the school to avoid, as far as we can, transmission of this virus from multiple points into and out of the school.
2. Once again, all **parents are asked not to cross the school gate** at any time for any reason.
3. **Please ring into the school** and the secretary will take your message over the phone.
4. If you wish to speak to a member of **staff**, they **will ring you back when free to do so**.
5. If **a meeting** is required, this **will be accommodated after 3:30pm and will take place in the school hall** with all wearing face masks.
6. **Visitor COVID Procedures have been added to the Parent section on the School website.**

All work on Home Learning Class pages on website will be available from Thursday 7th January for you to access from home. Please be fully aware, that we cannot replicate a 'school day' through this medium; we will ensure core learning content is provided and seek your support in ensuring your child accesses the work daily. **Not everything requires printing; most of the tasks can be completed on paper off screen and they copied and uploaded to the site for their teacher to see. Answers will be provided for work for marking at home when appropriate.**

Primary 6 & Primary 7 Classes.

Both P6 & P7 classes will use Google Classroom to access their learning and it is essential that they are logging into these classrooms daily from home. Once again, answers will be provided for marking work at home when appropriate to do so.

Transfer Primary 7 group of 2020/21.

Minister Weir released the following short tweet this morning:

"Exam preparation flexibility for face-to-face teaching next week is only for post primaries and aimed at those taking GCSEs in the second week of January. The Department is not bringing in any additional indemnity, so any school outside of DE instruction would be at own risk."

The Transfer children, therefore, CANNOT ATTEND next week as we had previously arranged.

The risk of infection is simply not worth taking. I have already posted a comment on the Transfer Google Classroom this morning for the children in this group and ask you to read this also. Please, ensure your child sitting the transfer at the end of January 2021 logs into the Transfer Google

Classroom at least twice a day for work and answers and corrections next week. It is important that they continue to refresh the information and learning to date for returning the following week.

I know this is not the start to 2021 that we had all hoped for, but it is a necessary one to keep our children, ourselves and our communities safer. The glimmer is shining in the months ahead of the vaccine reaching our school too and it will be a welcome sight coming in!

Once again, thank you all sincerely, for supporting our school in the gracious manner that you have done so to this point; with your continued support, please God, we can look forward to brighter days ahead and a healthier, safer world will be our to share again.

Take care, keep safe and well and Happy New Year!

With very best wishes,

Anne McGuinness

Anne McGuinness (Principal)

DE Definition of vulnerable groups for Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January.

- A child who has an assigned social worker
- A child who is supported through CAMHS.
- A child who is in receipt of a Statement of Special Educational Needs
- A child who is accessing EOTAS

DE Definition of a key worker

- Health and Social Care including doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers, staff required to maintain our health and social care sector.
- Education and welfare - includes pre-school and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during COVID19 response;
- Public safety and national security - civilians and police, key contractors, Fire and Rescue Services, prison services and other nation security roles.
- Transport - including those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during COVID19 response;
- Utilities and communications - including staff needed for oil, gas, electric, water, sewage, as well as postal, banking, building society and Credit Union staffs;
- Financial Services - all essential service providers;
- Food and other necessary goods - including food processing, production, distribution and sales;
- Retail - those permitted to operate by the executive as 'essential'
- Other essential workers such as national and local government officials including admin occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID19 response.