***“To be the best we can be every day, in every way!”***

ST PATRICK’S PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Monday 1st June 2020.

Good morning to all parents.

 I hope this letter finds you and all your families safe and well. I applaud you for all you have done so quickly to adapt to Home Schooling and there is no question about it, that has been a massive shift in your daily roles. I can appreciate sincerely, the added challenge of juggling working from home for so many of you.

I cannot believe that we are into Week 10 of COVID19 and we have no classes back yet. Sadly, it can be confirmed, that there will not be any children returning to school before the Summer Holidays begin at the end of June. I wish I could provide you with clear information as to what will happen regarding the gradual and phased reopening of Primary Schools, but I can’t as no one has given us that information either. I appreciate that all decisions taken by NI Executive are taken to keep us all and your children, safe and well, and therefore, will await their direction as to what we are to do.

**Re-opening:-**

There have been a lot of stories, speculation and enquiries as to reopening in late August and what groups are to return. Please, we will contact you immediately when we are given the directive from Stormont, DE, EA and CCMS if this is to happen and who it will involve.

**School Reports:**

Staff are working hard behind the scenes to complete reports for 2019/20 academic year. In light of current circumstances, assessments that are a feature of annual reports will not take place. The content of all reports will be more general in nature due to the untimely interruption of COVID19 into our lives. However, every child will have a report written by their class teacher and these will be collated into family groups and posted out to each respective family at end of June as usual.

**Home Learning P1 – P5:**

Thank you to the tremendous work teachers have put into maintaining the volume of work for their classes through the website. Without a hesitation they took on teaching remotely and have refined this over the past 10 weeks. I cannot praise them nor thank them enough for their professionalism and their continued dedication to every pupil at our school.

Today, 1st June, sees a further link with parents and staff as we now have comments and upload facilities added and activated as part of each class folder in Home Learning Link. Staff will respond to communications directly themselves between 11:00am and 2:00pm and each teacher will specify when they will be available to respond to your comments and children’s work. Correction of all work remains with parents as logistically, it cannot be accommodated otherwise but, feel free to upload something your child is proud of for their teacher to see and comment on.

**Home Learning P6 & P7 and Booster Classes**

It is unbelievable the daily rate of exchange between staff and pupils predominantly on Google Classroom; once again, I salute Mrs Bradley and Mrs Kinsella for the mighty work they have engaged in and described as ‘addictive!!’ In the absence of formal schooling as we know it, Primary 6 and & have had a superb replacement for teaching and learning that reflects the excellence of the teachers who have established it and who manage it day and daily – thank you both, sincerely, for all your professionalism.

I have had a couple of enquiries as to when Home Schooling can cease; well, end of June sounds just right and according to our holiday list, that would be June 23rd at 12:00noon.

**Contact Information:**

If anyone has changed their mobile phone details or address since March, please send an email to the school stating your name, address and change of number as necessary so that we can update all records immediately. Texts can only be sent to mobile numbers that are active; emails can only be sent to email addresses that are current; letters (reports!!) can only be received at addresses that you live at now.

**Finally**, We are asking all our parents to please talk to their child/ren about social distancing and what this will look like in school. We want to gently remind them to stay in their seats; kindly tell them not to touch anything belonging to anyone else in the classroom – just what you have yourself; patiently keep telling them that all toys from home will be waiting for them when they go home and only they come to school, not their things.

Create a game out of thorough hand washing – sing ‘This is way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands….’ Or ‘Happy Birthday’ x 2 and show them how to hand-wash properly. Create as much independence as possible.

We will send out more detailed daily routines, structures and times for staggered starts and collections to avoid congestion at school gates by adults at any time in the near future when we have more definitive directives from Department of Education and NI Executive and this will be released when they deem the time right to do so.

Above all, we will greet and welcome each child daily with care, respect and happiness for our school must be a place they want to come to for the next year! Together, we can avoid the ‘fear factor’ for children which COVID19 can create and gently, we will keep them safe for you each day.

If there is anything I can do to support you in any way, please, do not hesitate to contact me by email at the info address on the letter head.

I look forward to welcoming you and your child back to St Patrick’s PS in the near future and until then, take care and keep safe and well.

With very best wishes,

Anne Mc Guinness

Principal