

St. Mary's Primary School Cabragh

10 Whites Road, Cabragh, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, BT70 3AN

Telephone: (028) 8776 7356

Acting Principal: Mrs Louise Quinn



2nd January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope that you and your family are well and that you had an enjoyable Christmas break albeit different from previous years. I also wish a speedy recovery to any member of our school community who has been affected in any way by COVID-19 and I will continue to keep you all in my thoughts and prayers.

Late on New Year's Eve, the Minister of Education issued a letter to schools, detailing revised arrangements for their re-opening in January. Following recent advice on the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the levels of transmission and the number of positive cases, all Primary schools have been directed by the Minister of Education to teach children remotely, until the 11th January when it is planned that schools will reopen for face to face teaching. The Minister has indicated that this late change has been necessary "...after unprecedented levels of positive Covid-19 tests since Christmas, and the pressure this applies to our health service."

Following the Minister of Education's statement, I would like to outline our new arrangements for next week.

As you are already aware Monday 4th January is a school holiday and Tuesday 5th January is a planned Staff Development Day. We had originally planned for children to return to school on Wednesday 6th January. This day will now be used to allow staff time to prepare for Remote Learning. No pupils should attend school on this day. Online teaching and learning activities will be available for all pupils via Google Classroom on Thursday 7th January and Friday 8th January. All children should remain at home on Thursday 7th January and Friday 8th January, except for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers who cannot be accommodated by alternative childcare arrangements. **Please see more detailed information below, regarding criteria for vulnerable children and children of Key Workers.**

Peter Weir has asked schools to assist key workers who are maintaining essential public services, and who have exhausted all other options for childcare. **Therefore, St. Mary's will be open on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January and we will accommodate children of key workers and vulnerable children. If your child meets the criteria, we will make arrangements to provide supervised learning for your children. (8.45 am – 1.30 pm for Foundation Stage children and 8.45 am – 2.45pm for Key Stage 1 and 2 children.)**

There will be no school based face to face teaching on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. The focus will be on supervised learning in school rather than teaching.

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It is in the interests of everyone's safety and to also try and contain the spread of the virus, within our community, that we wish to keep pupil numbers to a minimum next week. If you feel that your child meets the stated criteria for Key Worker or Vulnerable children and you would like your child to attend school on Thursday 7th January and Friday 8th January, I would be grateful if you could complete the survey on the following link (<https://forms.gle/oUAZDN8PN4dZ39Fa7>) and **submit before 5pm on Sunday 3rd January 2021**. This will help us to plan for the provision of supervised learning for Vulnerable children and children of Key Workers. Following receipt of any requests, I will contact parents to make further arrangements.

Please see below for Government definitions

- Appendix A for definitions of Key workers.
- Appendix B for definitions of Vulnerable Children

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our key workers, especially those who are working tirelessly and so courageously on the front line.

On behalf of all the staff at St. Mary's I would also like to wish each and every one of our children and parents a happy and healthy new year.

Kind Regards,

Louise Quinn

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Appendix A

Definition of key workers:

- **Health and Social Care.** This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector;
- **Education and childcare.** This includes pre-school and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response;
- **Public safety and national security.** This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles;
- **Transport.** This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response;
- **Utilities and Communication.** This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, banking and waste disposal;
- **Financial Services.** This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure);
- **Food and other necessary goods.** This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g. hygiene, medical, etc.);
- **Retail.** This includes those workers who have been working throughout the pandemic in food retail, for example, and will now extend to those working in other retail businesses permitted to operate by the Executive from June 2020;
- **Other workers essential to delivering key public services** such as the National Crime Agency; and
- **Key national and local government** including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.

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Appendix B

Definition of Vulnerable Children:

- A child who has an assigned social worker because he or she is a child in need, in need of protection (or on the child protection register) or is a looked after child.
- A child in need includes young carers, children with disabilities, and children living in families where there is domestic abuse, substance abuse, and / or mental health difficulties.
- A child who is receiving support from, or has been referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- A child who has a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), a child who is accessing EOTAS, or a child who normally accesses Education Nurture Units.
- A child who is 'on-the-edge' of receiving support from children's social services.
- A child who is in need, including in need of protection, but whose need is not known to statutory services.
- A child who is not known to statutory or voluntary and community support services but who is vulnerable because their family is under increased pressure due to Covid-19 related circumstances.
- A young person who was previously a looked after child, whether or not they are receiving support from statutory services.
- A child who has been placed for adoption.
- Asylum seeking and refugee children and children whose parents have no recourse to public funds.