

St. Mary's Primary School Cabragh

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

Telephone: (028) 8776 7356

Acting Principal: Mrs Louise Quinn



6th January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well in these very challenging times. I wrote to you all on the 2nd January with details of our school restart. Unfortunately, we now face another period of extended closure and remote learning. We are so sorry that we are now unable to welcome our children back to school and we are determined to try and minimise the adverse effect that the lockdown will have on the children's education.

Remote learning becomes effective from tomorrow, Thursday 7th January. All children should remain at home 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.**

Remote Learning will be delivered via Google Classroom. This E-Learning platform will allow teachers to keep in daily contact and schedule teaching and learning on a daily basis. We are very fortunate that parents and pupils have had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with Google Classroom during the school year. Google Classroom will motivate pupils to engage with their learning. Three tasks will be set daily (Literacy, Numeracy and one other subject area). Each family can devise their own routine to suit the needs of their own circumstances. We are very mindful of the fact that many parents are working and supporting more than one child with their remote learning. Each teacher will be in contact with your child via Google Classroom tomorrow morning, outlining the teaching and learning activities. We would encourage parents to ensure that your child is completing their online work.

To assist with remote learning, teachers will provide resources/exercise books for your child. These will be available to collect in school on Monday 11th January. More details to follow. Please note, these are not worksheet packs that were distributed during the last lockdown in March 2020.

We have invested time and money in training all teaching staff in delivering Remote Learning through Google Classroom. This E-Learning platform makes learning interactive and facilitates more pupil / teacher engagement. It offers teachers the ability to include videos and web pages into their lessons. Teachers are also able to provide immediate feedback to motivate the pupils.

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We ask that all parents/guardians and pupils read and complete the remote learning agreements on the following forms:

- Remote Learning Parent Agreement - <https://forms.gle/mBphfUusPQnCcPJ6A>
- Remote Learning Pupil Agreement - <https://forms.gle/uSySnBRqrDuhpF8L9>

During the lockdown last year, the school contacted all parents/guardians regarding access to electronic devices. Thankfully, all families had no problems and were able to engage with remote learning. We want to continue to offer the best support possible, which includes, ensuring children can effectively learn at home during this period of remote learning. In order to ensure that your circumstances have not changed and to gather information on your child's digital access at home, we are now asking that all parents/guardians complete the following survey. (<https://forms.gle/ZGLvsK1n3UZv9Twn6>)

In order to stop the rapid spread of Covid-19 through our school community, DE have directed that all schools are to remain closed and for remote learning to take place. DE guidance states that limiting attendance of pupils and staff at school is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with people in other households. Therefore, the safest course of action for all pupils and staff is to keep your child at home if at all possible, to try and contain the spread of the virus within our community.

However, Peter Weir has asked schools to assist key workers who are maintaining essential public services. Therefore, St. Mary's will open for any vulnerable children and will accommodate children of key workers who meet the criteria set by DE.

If you are a Key Worker and meet the criteria or have a vulnerable child and have exhausted all other alternatives for child care provision, the school 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.) If you would like to apply for a place for your child, I would be grateful if you could complete the survey on the following link (<https://forms.gle/wLM44E7DHjMzTLR38>) and **submit before 5pm on Thursday 7th January 2021**. This survey will be issued on a weekly basis. This will help us to plan for the provision of supervised learning for Vulnerable children and children of Key Workers each week. Following receipt of any requests, I will contact parents to make further arrangements.

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There will be no school based face to face teaching for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers who attend school. The focus will be on supervised learning in school rather than teaching. There will also be **no school meals** available to children during this period of school closure. A payment will be made to the parents/guardians of all children entitled to free school meals. All vulnerable children and children of key workers attending school will need to bring a packed lunch.

Please see below for Government definitions

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

Primary 7 Transfer Test

Please see <https://www.pptcni.com/>

PPTC have issued the following information. *"If no pupils are able to sit the Entrance Assessment on 30th January 2021 because of Covid restrictions, and these restrictions would not have ended before 6th February 2021 then PPTC will be unable to provide an assessment for any pupils. The responsibility falls on PPTC schools to ensure that their admissions criteria cover this contingency."*

PPTC accept that this decision may be disappointing to many children who would have welcomed the opportunity to take the assessment.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please pass on our best wishes to your child and we look forward to everyone's return to school.

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.