



St. Mary's Primary School

20 Cloughcor Road, Ballymagorry, Strabane, Co. Tyrone. BT82 0BE.

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Principal: Mrs A Devine

Wednesday 24th March 2021

Dear Parent / Person with Responsibility,

I hope to find you all safe and well. As you know school opened for ALL pupils on Monday 22nd March. It is lovely having ALL our pupils back on site and I have to commend and congratulate our fantastic pupils for their smooth integration. It is as if they had never been away, and that to me is a very positive sign!! So sincere thanks to our amazing pupils and to our fantastic staff for pulling together and for making this transition as seamless as possible for our pupils.

In the Newsletter I issued last week, I provided you all with a comprehensive starting back to school programme outlining our procedures on site and these procedures will continue daily for our pupils and staff.

We have returned to school and all pupils are in protective “bubbles” as before for each class in order to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Classes have separate breaks and lunchtimes as before and hygiene procedures are being carefully followed. We will be trying to minimise the touching of hard surfaces therefore, where possible, doors will remain open during the day. It is important that ALL contact details are amended if there have been any changes to telephone numbers, home addresses etc. during this period of closure.

If your child exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms or if he/she feels unwell his/her temperature will be taken and parents will be contacted immediately. You will be asked to come to the school to collect your child and if the sick child has any siblings in the school you will be asked to bring him/her/them home. It is your responsibility to get your child tested. Your household MUST isolate until the results come back. In the event of a positive case you MUST notify me immediately.

YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

- Pupils are asked to wear their school uniform as normal on return except for a **WEDNESDAY** wherein pupils are asked to dress in **P.E. /Sportswear** to facilitate the washing of school uniforms mid -week.
- Pupils **WILL NOT** require their own stationery. Pupils may bring plastic lunch boxes as before or they can keep their break/lunch in a disposable bag. We would ask that his/her name is clearly marked on his/her lunchbox and on return home the lunchbox/plastic bottle **SHOULD BE WASHED**.
- Schoolbags **WILL NOT** be required and we ask that you **DO NOT** send any other personal items to school with your child.

WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO:

- Please don't send your child to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if you suspect a member of your household has COVID-19. You are advised to get tested as soon as possible and to notify the school as soon as possible.
- Please DO NOT gather at the school gate
- Please don't allow your child to share food/drink with friends.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

- DO let us know if your child will be absent due to COVID-19 symptoms. You can email me on adevine835@c2ken.net
- Do encourage your child to socially distance, if possible
- Do encourage good hand hygiene.

DROPPING OFF AND COLLECTION

Class teachers will be in the classroom to greet their class each morning from **8.45am-9.05am**.

Pre- School/P1 pupils are asked to walk to their classroom doors by themselves so that footfall on site remains limited using the Pre-School/Primary One entrance.

P2/P3 pupils will enter school grounds via the P2/P3 entrance doors at the side of our big playground as before. Class teachers will be there to greet the pupils. Again, parents are asked to let their child/children come in to school by themselves. I know that this may be difficult but we are trying to reduce footfall around our school building.

P4-P7 pupils will go directly to their mobile classrooms each morning where their class teacher will be there.

Pupils are asked **NOT** to be on site before 8.45am (please see guidance from Ciara regarding Pre-School pupils as they start at 9.15am)

We would ask that **NO** other adult enters the school grounds unless they have arranged a meeting at the School Office and if you need to go to the School Office, we would ask that you sanitise your hands on entry and wear a face mask/shield and adhere to the two metre social distancing requirement.

Adults are asked to adhere to social distancing regulations as well as the PHA guidance of not gathering in groups. Activity will be monitored by school staff and may be subject to change if health and safety of our school community is deemed of any concern.

We would ask that parents do not enter the school grounds without an appointment.

STARTING TIMES AND HOME TIMES

P1- P2 pupils- 8.45am-2pm

P3-P4 pupils- 8.45am -2.50pm

P5-P6 pupils- 8.45- 2.55pm

P7 pupils- 8.45-3.00pm

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Many of our pupils use a dedicated school transport service, either EA buses or Translink and these services will continue as before. P4-P7 pupils will remain on site until 3pm if they are using the Translink bus service and the bus will leave our school shortly after 3pm to be at the designated drop off locations at the usual times. Translink Bus times are as follows:

Strabane to St Mary's PS Cloughcor

Curlyhill Road (Glen Road)	08.40
Dock Street Bus Shelter	08.50
Strabane, Glenside	08.55
St Mary's PS, Cloughcor	09.05

St Mary's PS Cloughcor to Strabane

St Mary's PS, Cloughcor	14.05	15.05
Ballymagorry	14.10	15.10
Strabane, Glenside	14.15	15.15
Strabane Academy Gate	14.17	15.17
NW Regional College	14.18	15.18
Dock Street Bus Shelter	14.20	15.20
Curlyhill Road (Glen Road)	14.25	15.25

Whilst the wearing of face coverings for pupils under 13 is not mandatory, the Dept. of Education strongly recommend that all pupils using school buses do so in cases when it is deemed to be appropriate. Issues to consider include the age of the pupil or medical issues that could make wearing a mask distressing. Pupils arriving and leaving the school bus will be directed to and from buses by staff in order to minimise contact between pupils in different classes. Assistants may direct pupils to sit with his/her class where possible. Pupils will be given designated zones on the bus to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a child being identified as a close contact of a confirmed case.

The following is a list of DOs and DON'Ts issued by the Education Authority that pupils can use to help keep themselves and other passengers safe.

DO:

- Wash hands/sanitise hands before using transport
- Use hand sanitiser when available
- Wear a face covering if you can do safely
- Catch it- Bin it- Kill it! Carry tissues, cover coughs and sneezes.
- Leave space between other users when queuing, getting on and getting off the bus
- Stay back from the driver
- Remove all belongings and dispose of any rubbish safely.

DON'T

Don't travel or attend school if you are displaying COVID-19 symptoms or are part of a family advised to self-isolate.

Don't share personal items

Don't eat or drink on board – unless for medical reasons

Try to follow these rules as strictly as possible

MEDICAL/DIETARY NEEDS

If your child has developed any medical or dietary needs that we are unaware of, please contact the school so that we can keep your child safe whilst at school. We would ask that pupils **DO NOT** bring **ANY** foods containing **NUTS** to school as we have pupils with **SEVERE NUT ALLERGIES** and want to reduce risks.

ENGAGE PROGRAMME

Having secured funding from the Department of Education we will be able to provide small Literacy group work to targeted pupils in specific year groups. Mr. Haughey will be providing this support to our pupils. Funding is timebound and I am hoping that it can be extended until June 2021 but to date this has not been confirmed. As a result, Mr Haughey will be working with some pupils on their return to school until the Easter break and Miss Carlin will be covering the P7 pupils until further notice.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

Testing is only available for individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 or if you have been advised by the Public Health Agency Contact Tracing Service to have a test.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A new, continuous acute cough- this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if your child usually has a cough, it may be worse than usual); OR
- A high temperature /fever- this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- A loss or change in sense of smell or taste.

If an individual **DOES NOT HAVE THESE SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS**, they **DO NOT REQUIRE A TEST**. We have been informed by the Education Restart- New School Day guidance that pupil/parents should only book a COVID-19 test only if they have one or more of the symptoms above.

We are aware that at this time of year, it is common for colds, sore throats and viral infections to circulate. In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little interruption to their education. In other cases, for instance where they have a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover. If you suspect it will be unpleasant for your child to attend school if feeling unwell then I would suggest you keep your child at home until he/she feels a bit brighter. If we feel it is proving unpleasant for child to be in class, we will be making contact and will ask you to collect your child/children.

We have been advised that if a pupil or staff member **DOES NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS** of COVID-19 but has other cold- like symptoms, they do not need to be tested and do not need to self-isolate. The individual can attend school but only if fit to do so.

Additionally, where a pupil displays gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhoea, they should NOT attend school until they have been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days-48 hours. If your child develops a temperature after the 48 hours of sickness, he/she **SHOULD NOT ATTEND** school and further advice is to be sought from your GP.

WHERE A PUPIL/PARENT HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND REFUSE TO BOOK A TEST, THEY SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL FOR 14 DAYS.

Unfortunately, we will be unable to organise extra- curricular activities until further notice.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

School will finish at Noon on Thursday 1st April -9th April (inclusive)

I would appeal to all parents for your co-operation in these difficult times of COVID-19. In order to protect our pupils and staff, I would ask you continue to be very vigilant for any symptoms which may be COVID-19 related or if your child is ill I would ask you to please to keep your child at home. This is to ensure we try as much as possible to keep functioning so that we can continue to deliver face to face teaching for our pupils.

We need to protect our pupils, staff and any vulnerable individuals we live with or care for at present.

If I can help or support you in any way, please do not hesitate to phone or email me on the e mail provided.

Kind Regards,



SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

