|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capture***Principal: Miss R Robinson******Tel: 028 38851778******Fax: 028 38852568****B Ed (Hons) M Ed PQH*  |  **St Mary’s Primary School****84 Maghery Road****Maghery****Dungannon****Co Tyrone****BT71 6PA**  |

21/03/2020

Dear Parents,

The following information is taken from the most recent advice given to schools in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. It outlines the guidelines to parents should they wish for their child/children to attend school.

‘**The list 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, services and waste disposal;

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);

• Other workers essential to delivering key public services;

• Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.

The children of these key workers who are covered are children up to the end of Year 10 as well as our vulnerable children. Vulnerable children is defined currently as those children who are in need of protection, or in need, as defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995. The term vulnerable encompasses those children who are in need of protection, or in need, as defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995. Children and young people in need may include those:

• Receiving support from Health & Social Services including family support, child protection and looked after children services

• On the Child Protection Register

• With statements of special education needs

• Accessing EOTAS

• With emerging and diagnosed mental health needs

• Who are homeless

• Who are young carers

• Subject to paramilitary threat

• Whose parents have mental health problems

• Whose parents have alcohol and drug addictions

• Affected by domestic violence’

**The information also states that:**

Given that there may be uncertainty over school meals provision, children who intend to come to school **should be sent with a packed lunch. There will also be no snack provided by the school.**

The requirement will be that **schools will be open during existing school operational hours**. Therefore, **There will be no breakfast club or after-school club provision**. The school will open from 9am, Primary 1,2&3 will leave at 2pm and Primary 4,5,6,&7 at 3.15pm **SHARP**.

Normal home to school transport **will not operate** from Monday. There will be separate public communication about this involving the Education Authority and Translink. The consequence of this is **that any parents/carers who wish their child to attend school will be expected to make their own arrangements for transport**.

**The following information has also been provided to schools:**

**Department of Education: General Guidance on COVID-19 for schools:**

In Northern Ireland as in the rest of the country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

That is why the UK government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing.

And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. **If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.**

That is why the Executive has **asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend**.

It is important to underline that schools, colleges and other educational establishments remain safe places for children. **But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.**

Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. **They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.**

**If a family does not meet the definition of key worker or their child is not vulnerable but wants to attend?**

Families can be directed to the Family Support NI website which has details of a range of support available to families including registered day-care provision in the area.

You are asked to consider this very carefully before making the decision to send your child to school. Please consider the health of your child, the health of other children and their families, the health of our staff and their families, and the health of those who will leave and collect your children to and from school. We wish to minimise the spread of cross-contamination as much as possible.

In light of the fact that we are being provided with up-dates from Mr Weir and those in the powers of education which is continuously changing, we will be closed on Monday 23rd to put in place preparations to accommodate safely the opening of school on Tuesday 24th March at 9.00 am.

We understand that after reading the list above you may have no option but to send your child to school. Although directive states that only one parent needs to be a key worker, please make a conscientious decision as to the possibility that your partner may be able to accommodate childcare, and therefore work with us in stopping the spread of Covid 19, within the small community of Maghery, its surrounding area and beyond.

Should you have no alternative to require the services of the school, please e mail the school secretary pfox756@c2kni.net with the following information by 12 noon on Monday 23rd March 2020 so we know how many children will be in from Tuesday

* Your name
* Which Key Worker you and if relevant your partner falls into
* Which day (s) your child/ren will be in school between 24th and 27th March
* Work phone number for verification purposes

As a staff be aware, that in order to protect our own health we will be wearing gloves. We will require that children adhere to the advice with regards to social distancing from other children and that of adults. We will contact you if your child finds it difficult to adhere to this. In addition, please send your child in full school uniform with no school bag. Equipment will be provided for your child in school but will be limited due to our attempts to do our part in curtailing the spread of Covid-19.

**Remember**

Do NOT send your child to school if:

* He/she is unwell
* Any member of the family is unwell
* Any member of your family is in the “vulnerable” category

**Should your child develop any symptoms of Covid-19 the following will be carried through:**

* We will contact you immediately via the number you give us for your place of work.
* If we cannot contact you, we will then ring your mobile number. **Note relatives will not be contacted due for the reasons outlined by the Department of Education**.

With kind regards

Miss R Robinson