



Dungannon Primary School

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20th March 2020

Dear Parent

Update on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

By now you will have heard via the media that all schools across Northern Ireland and Great Britain are to close from 5:00pm today. It is important to note that we are **not** viewing this closure as an extension to the planned summer break. The staff of Dungannon Primary School will continue to provide online activities and booklets for your child to complete, thus ensuring the continuation of teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers will assess your child's work regularly and they will remain in contact with you each week. Our school website will be updated weekly and you will be provided with a weekly timetable of activities. It is important to ensure you spend quality time with your child/ren. Encourage your child to engage in art and craft activities, cooking activities, physical activities etc. Our teachers would love to hear about these activities. The Google Classroom provides the opportunity for you to upload photographs – please share these with your child's teacher.

Supporting Children of Key Workers in Primary School

Yesterday evening the Minister for Education made a statement outlining how schools will close from today. However, he stated that schools will open with skeleton staff on Monday 23rd March to support identified Key Workers.

Firstly, it is vitally important that we are aware how many children of Key Workers require school support. With this in mind, if you are an identified Key Worker, **please make contact with us by 3:00pm on Friday 20th March** to inform us if your child requires school support. This can be done by phone, e-mail or the school app. Once we have confirmed numbers staff will carry out a risk assessment on Monday 23rd March. We will then provide further information in relation to what provision the school can provide to key workers. Please note **SCHOOL IS NOT OPEN TO KEY WORKERS' CHILDREN ON MONDAY 23RD MARCH.**

Before contacting school, please pay particular attention to the following points. Schools will not be able to operate a 'normal' school day. Many schools across Northern Ireland are already operating with a significant reduction of staffing and this will probably get worse over time. Dungannon Primary School is currently operating with a significant reduction in staff.

Points to consider:

- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family members, friends etc. Please try and use schools as a last resort. This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance.
- **Children will be required to wear their school uniform.**



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- School will only be open if there are sufficient staff available to maintain a safe environment. This means that decisions to restrict the number of children attending or to close the school at short notice may have to be taken. Up to date contact details must be available and parents must have in place a procedure for the immediate collection of children if safe staffing levels become unavailable or to collect any child who becomes unwell. **Parents must be able to answer their mobile phone at ALL times.**
- Please ensure that you explain to your child that school will not be operating as normal. It will only be childcare. **They will not be taught by their teacher.** They will be restricted in their movements to try to ensure social distancing. Age appropriate on-line programmes and films may be made available by the school.
- Children will NOT have access to many toys and games at school. A limited range of resources may be made available in the interests of hygiene. Please remember that while it is not certain how long the virus causing COVID19 survives on surfaces, studies suggest that coronavirus may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days depending on the material.
- Please ensure you provide your child with a snack and a packed lunch.

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your child to school. Obviously, if your **ONLY** option is to send your child to school, we will look after them in order to support you in your important role.

Pupils entitled to Free School Meals

A number of our children are in receipt of free school meals. Unfortunately, we have received no guidance or advice as to how we are to support these pupils. Therefore, we will provide a Food Bank which will provide enough food for **one main meal per day** for any child currently on our Free School Meals Register. The Food Bank will open Monday at 11:00am – 1:00pm and parents will be issued with food parcels to cater for 5 meals (1 week). This provision is subject to change – I will continue to keep you informed.

Pupil Packs

Unfortunately, a number of parents were unable to attend our Information sessions which were held yesterday and today. It is important to note that this forced closure should not be viewed as an extension to the summer holidays. **Pupils will be required to complete all work set.** Teachers will continue to provide work to ensure the curriculum is delivered to all pupils. If any child does not complete set work this will be viewed as the equivalent of a child not attending school and I will be in contact with you to ask why work has not been completed. **If you have not received work books these are available for collection on Monday 23rd March. School will be open from 9:00am – 3:00pm.**

Pupils in Primary 7

Unfortunately, Primary School has ended abruptly for our Primary 7 pupils. We want to assure parents that we will continue to work with you to prepare your child as they get ready to move to their new school in September. We also want to acknowledge the huge contribution these pupils have made to the life of Dungannon Primary School. We do plan to host a Graduation Event. This may have to take place during the Autumn Term – we will provide further information at a later date.

Once again, I want to thank you for your continued support. I want to reassure you that we will do everything we can to support you and your child during this difficult time. Please look after yourself and your loved ones. God Bless.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Thompson
PRINCIPAL



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