 St Patrick’s P.S.

 and Nursery

 Castlederg



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23 11 20

Dear Parent/s

I hope you are all well. The normal flow of life within school, like your own lives, will be greatly changed this Christmas season at school.

We are disappointed for the children that many of the Christmas school activities will not be able to take place this year due to the present restrictions in society and within education due to Covid -19.

However, when you reflect back to March and on the Re-Start of Education in September, I am sure that you will be simply glad that the children continue to attend school each day and are well and happy to be with their friends in class. The most important job now is to continue to be careful and follow the regulations, to ensure that our pupils continue to attend school safely right until the Christmas holidays.

I must pay tribute to the staff who have continued to work every day in difficult circumstances, adhering to all the regulations and having to make significant changes to the way they work.

The pupils have adapted so well, accepted all the new rules and have been so well behaved and have worked so hard since their return, as I would have expected.

Thanks to all the parent/s and carers who continue to follow all the rules to keep all of us within the school community safe.

Remember to follow the guidance issued by the Public Health Agency. If your child or any of your household experience Covid-19 symptoms seek medical advice. Children with a temperature or a new continuous cough should not attend school until you have spoken with medical staff and myself. Pupils who are deemed close contacts of a positive case should not attend school until advised by the school.

**Google Classroom/On-line Learning.**

All classes are now using Google Classroom for their homework and for home school links. The ability to have a digital remote learning tool will become a requirement for all schools in the future. The ability to use online learning allows children make relevant connections with their learning and develops the skills and capabilities for lifelong learning and will be a requirement of this school moving forward. Home-working is set for a week which allows parent/s have flexibility in how they want their children to study at home.

All our pupils from P4 to P7 have been trained in the use of Google Classroom. IXL Learning, Accelerated Reader and Mathletics and Collins On-Line Reading. They use these devices/platforms weekly/daily in school. If a pupil can operate a phone, device or gaming console, they will be able to use Google Classroom.

In the Nursery, P1, P2 and P3 Google classrooms parents must take the lead as would be normal. It is vitally important that parent/s help pupils with their reading and words daily. 5/10 minutes daily will allow your child to develop the most important skill taught at school for life.

If you experience difficulties with any of the new platforms, you can message the teacher via Google Classroom or contact the school by email. Usually this can be resolved within a teaching day.

Devices could be considered as ideal Christmas Gifts and do not have to be expensive. We use Chromebooks in school as well as more expensive devices.

As we encourage more learning to move online remember to check our website for the monthly Online Safety Newsletters which are posted on our website with tips and updates on how to keep young children safe online.

Fr. Fraser celebrated Mass with the school children on Friday 20th November at 10am via the parish webcam.

Many of our classes have been taking part in online activities and webinars including workshops with Sentinus and Microsoft Ireland.

**Open Invite - Applications for P1 and Nursery**

An Application Portal for P1 and for Nursery School at St Patrick’s PS and Nursery Unit for the next academic year will be available online at the start of December at [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk). Like last year this is an online application procedure**.**

Our updated prospectus for nursery and our primary and all details will be available on our website at the end of November 2020.

As we are always oversubscribed for both Nursery and P1 please complete online applications as soon as possible. Late applications cannot be considered until all other children are placed. Make sure all family members are informed.

Parents can contact the school by email if they have any questions or to ensure they have included all the correct information on application forms. Thank you.

**Parking at School Collection times.**

Keep parking safely at school dropping off and collection times. Avoid double parking or parking in the bus bays. Don’t obscure the entrances to school gates and remember to cross the children across the road safely. Let’s keep our pupils safe.



**Christmas Fun day.**

We will host a fun day for all the primary children on Thursday 17th December within their classroom bubble. They can wear their Christmas Jumpers and outfits for the day and their teachers will have a Christmas Party, Christmas Movies etc. They can order a snack box for the canteen on the day. The Nursery fun day will take place on Wednesday 16th December.

**Holidays**

The Nursery Pupils finish on Wednesday 16th December.

The primary school closes for the Christmas holidays on Friday 18th December at 12.00pm.

The primary and nursery school will re-open for the Spring term on Tuesday 5th January 2021 as normal.

Thank you and keep safe,

Brian Mc Gurk

Principal