



## New Term January 2021

Dear Parent

I trust you have had a wonderful Christmas with your family and that everyone is safe and well. I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year...we are looking forward to a healthy and safe 2021 and being reunited with everyone in school again soon.

No doubt you are aware of the changes to the new term from the media and we trust God that as the year progresses, we will see positive changes and remain hopeful that COVID will soon be behind us.

The new school term begins on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January and this will take the form of remote learning for all children until Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January. Some will engage in remote learning at home while others will engage in remote learning in school. Regardless of the where, all children will all undertake the same activities.

The Department of Education have issued guidance as follows:

- Children whose parents are key workers can attend school. You will see in a separate seesaw post an application form for keyworker provision (similar to our last lockdown).
- Children who fall under the definition of vulnerable, as set out in the cross-departmental Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan 2020 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-cross-departmental-covid-19-vulnerable-children-and-young-peoples-plan> can also attend school. Please also find in a separate post an application form for attending school next week.

Completion of both forms, if applicable, is important so we can ascertain numbers in school. It is useful for us to plan effectively realising how many children will be engaging in remote learning in school and how many will complete it at home. As with the previous lockdown, guidance would advise the safest place for your child is at home during this time to limit spread of the virus, so if there is a way that your child can stay home and engage in remote learning then that should be viewed as the safest option. However, we realise this isn't viable for everyone with work commitments or ensuring your child's positive well-being remains protected by receiving the support they need in a school setting.

- Remote learning will be shared as outlined in our Remote Learning Policy and this will be shared in a separate post. To keep it simple for next week, learning will be shared on Seesaw/ Google Classroom and work can be completed in purple books that children already have at home. Class teachers will provide more detailed information before Wednesday of what to expect each day. If the period of school closure is extended this will be reviewed to ensure everyone has adequate access to digital devices for online learning.
- While in school, children will receive 'supervised learning' and will engage in the same activities as their peers at home. The teacher/ classroom assistants will be there to

support as usual.

- Children engaging in remote learning at home (as per policy) should complete work and screenshot to teacher to gain their attendance mark. We fully understand that remote learning is not ideal, but we want in our commitment to your child's education, to emphasise it shouldn't be viewed as optional or as an extended break. As the policy outlines, we will work with you and if activities can't be completed, please let us know. We will do what we can to accommodate you and your working arrangements which we realise can be very demanding and home learning places even more pressure. Obviously, our priority is everyone's well-being, but we also have to ensure that in the event that school closure is extended, we can work together to ensure the best for everyone. Work submitted late or only partial work submitted, along with any communication at all from parents allow us to grant an attendance mark.
- **P7 transfer children can attend daily.** We feel this is only fair to a group of children whose learning has been disrupted enough over recent months in preparation for the test in a few weeks' time. Mrs Nelson will contact parents of transfer children separately with further details.
- Children who receive Free School Meals – please see separate post about further payments until 8<sup>th</sup> January. The payment will be made retrospectively on 11th January for week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> January to anyone it applies to. As a result of receiving payments, **ALL** children attending school next week should bring packed lunch and break. If this information changes, we will let you know on seesaw. Milk will still be available for children in school and bookings should be made in usual manner through the app.
- Clubs such as breakfast club, HOP and after schools will run as usual and bookings should be made using our school app. The new after school clubs is published in the parents' section of our app and remember 3.00 – 4.00pm clubs don't begin until Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, but HOP begins on 6th January as does breakfast club. Stringent measures will continue to be in place with children remaining in their separate bubbles.

I realise that only a day into the new year we are presented with a challenge. However, as we continue to work together, we will get through whatever lies ahead in the same manner we got through every last challenge.

**Happy New Year...** I believe this will be a good year because our God is faithful. We have so much to be thankful for as we approach this new year with hope and trust in Him. Let's hand over the next 365 days to Him, trust Him and His plans and celebrate that each new year and indeed each new day is a gift.

Yours sincerely,

Marina McCusker

Principal