



PORTSTEWART PRIMARY SCHOOL and NURSERY UNIT

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19th March 2020

Dear Parent

Coronavirus update (19/03/2020)

Yesterday the First Minister and Deputy First Minister made an announcement relating to COVID-19. Part of this concerned schools and wider educational settings. The Department of Education has confirmed that schools will close at the end of the day on Friday 20th March for all pupils and children.

Principals only heard the news about school closures at the same time as everybody else via listening to the local and national news. There are many things we simply do not have the answers for at this time but I will do my best to keep you informed as best I can. When I find out any additional information I will endeavour to contact parents to keep you up to date.

School will finish tomorrow for all of our pupils on Friday 20th March. As part of our response plan, **class teachers have been preparing packs of work for our children to complete at home over the school closure period.** This work is to initially last over a two week period. It will include Literacy and Numeracy work and links to online learning. We will endeavour to provide more curriculum guidance and packs of work to parents over time. I will give out more information about the arrangement of the collection of additional work packs in due course. **Your child will receive a pack of work on Friday 20th March.** If your child is not in school on Friday 20th March an adult can collect the pack of work from outside the main school office from 10am onwards. If you are unavailable to collect the pack of work we will endeavour to get the pack of work to you by personally leaving it on your doorstep, posting it through your letterbox or by posting it to your house.

Some key questions parents may have:

What are the arrangements for children of key workers in the community?

Nothing has been communicated to schools on this matter. Children of key workers may be educated via a central location and this would be to support children from all schools in a specific area.

What about the P7 pupils who may now have finished?

I have spoken to our P7 pupils and explained that at some stage, even if it is over the summer or in September, we will hold events to celebrate their time in our school and say proper goodbyes.

What is happening the planned trip to London?

Parents met on Wednesday evening with Mrs Taylor and it was agreed to cancel the trip under the current circumstances. The London school trip has now unfortunately been cancelled. Mrs Taylor will be in touch directly with parents of children who had plan to attend the London trip.

When will we receive information about the school photos?

Our school photographer has worked hard to produce order forms for all of the photos. These will be placed in the work pack which you will receive on Friday 20th March.

What will happen with AQE and pupils in Primary 6?

All P6 children wishing to do AQE tests will be in the same boat, advice will follow in due course. We will do all we can to ensure pupils are prepared for tests.

When will school resume?

Nothing has been communicated to schools on this matter. It is anticipated that the school closure will continue into the school summer holidays.

We will do all we can to support you as best we can. Please be mindful that members of staff may also become unwell over the coming weeks and months and if work is not available when intended there will be a reason for this.

On a personal note, I was devastated at the news and the impact it will have on our children being away from friends and familiar faces for an unknown period of time.

On Monday I plan to continue to be in school, I don't know yet about my staff and what the guidance will be. I do however know that that school on Monday will not be the same as it will be no longer filled with the laughter, excitement and buzz which is created from our children.

All I can do is wish you the very best of health and promise that we will continue to support our families in the best way we can. I thank you for your many messages of support for myself and my staff. We have a wonderful team in Portstewart Primary School and Nursery Unit and their support has been immense. I will continue to communicate information to parents as soon as information becomes available.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "K. Taylor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Mrs K Taylor
Principal