



'Forward Together in Friendship and Faith'

JONESBORO'PRIMARY SCHOOL

Monday, 23 March 2020

A Thuismitheoirí / Dear Parents

PLEASE READ THIS LETTER CAREFULLY

The education sector has been asked to play a role in the fight against Covid 19 and in supporting our colleagues in front line services and key worker roles during these frightening times.

Following on from the Education Minister's letter on Thursday 19th March, schools have been asked to facilitate our parents who fall into the Government's key worker category or vulnerable child group.

Key workers are identified as those whose work is critical to keeping the North of Ireland functioning during this outbreak.

Schools are being asked to provide a very different type of provision. Schools are now being asked to provide care for pupils – **not** education. There will be **NO** teaching. Your child may not necessarily be supervised by a teacher as we will be operating with a reduced staffing complement.

The number of pupils coming to school must be kept to;

1. A strict minimum and adhere to PHA guidance
2. Two metre social distancing from each other and from the adult -make sure you talk to your child about what this means
3. Meet safety requirements of pupil/adult ratio (dependent on staff availability – this may diminish over time).

It must be noted that schools have been asked to work in partnership and our school may not be the school available to your child. Any child coming to school, must have made application and have it agreed by the school principal. (see application form).

All of the advice including that of the Minister of Education is that **the safest place for your child is at HOME.**

We must ALL be practicing safe social distancing. Schools **MUST ONLY** be used as a place of **last resort**:

- Key workers such as teachers with caring responsibilities can ask their employer to work from home and should not require a place
- Key workers or their partner if not a key worker and who can work from home should not require a place.
- Children who have older siblings over the age of 14 (as the law states) should be left at home and supervised by the older sibling.

Points to Remember

- ☐ Children who attend school must bring a packed lunch as there is no guarantee of school catering being available and a snack.
- ☐ School will operate from 9am to normal closing time (2pm Rec – P3 and 3pm (P4 to P7)
- ☐ Child must wear full school uniform-not PE uniform as there will be no PE provision
- ☐ Key workers will be required to complete key worker form
- ☐ There is an inherent risk to children contracting CV19 if attending childcare provision, as a school we cannot guarantee their safety 100%
- ☐ Both parents (one of which should be a key worker) should be working at the same time and assure the school that all possible alternatives have been considered and exhausted eg other family members, friends etc
- ☐ There will be no teaching, this is childcare provision only (supervision will not necessarily be by a teacher)
- ☐ All resources to occupy your child for the duration of their time at school must be sent into school by you. Any equipment children bring to school should be disinfected and **MUST NOT** be shared. This message must be reinforced with children. Due to risk of cross contamination school cannot provide resources to your child
- ☐ Personal bag containing a personal towel, hand soap, sanitizer etc. must be sent into school with your child. EA have refused to provide schools with hygiene material or PPE
- ☐ We, as a school, must do everything we can to try and limit the number of children and adults who are together in a confined space
- ☐ Social distancing means children WILL BE spaced a minimum of 2 metres apart, this includes siblings. Staff will also be at least 2 metres apart from children, in order to keep themselves and their families safe from infection (this is an incredibly difficult situation for us all but necessary for the protection of all)
- ☐ If the ratio of staff to pupils decreases then school, on the grounds of health and safety must close. Parents will be informed immediately
- ☐ If the Principal is unable to be in school, then the school must close.

These measures must be put in place for the safety of all within the school.

DO NOT

Send your child to school if they are unwell or any family member is unwell.

Please find attached key worker application form. I would ask that this form is completed and returned by email to info@jonesboro.newry.ni.sch.uk by tonight **Monday 23rd March at 8.00pm.**

In order to plan effectively and after considering the above we need to know how many key workers/children will be availing of our limited childcare provision (again can I reiterate as a school we do not have a full complement of staff available and the safest place for your child is at home). When we have the proper information collated we will then be able to make further decisions. Again please be reminded that the education authorities are still talking about some schools acting as hubs. If this is the case then your child may be offered a place at another setting.

Currently, all staff are taking part in thoroughly cleaning our school so that we can be ready to accept children if the need arises.

Given the fluid nature of this situation and the advice being given, all of these arrangements could change at very short notice.

This is a very difficult and worrying time for us all.

Can I ask you to keep an eye on the school's social media for information but as per school policy, EMAIL or PHONE school with queries, (during school opening hours only)

PLEASE DO NOT use social media. School social media is not monitored and is used to provide information to parents only.

Most importantly of all, please stay safe and keep our families and children safe.

Yours sincerely

Donal Keenan