

OUR LADY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Principal: Mr Tomás Mc Kee



20th March, 2020

Reference: Coronavirus – School Closure

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to you regarding the recent announcement that all schools will close for an indefinite period on Monday 23rd March due to the Coronavirus.

First of all, as we all try to come to terms with the possible impact of the coronavirus and the devastating impact this has had on the world as a whole it is timely to recognise the importance of our health and wellbeing. Our children's education and the packs issued by staff will be of great benefit but I think we would all agree that our own and the children's health and wellbeing is much more important. I hope that you and all your families remain in good health and are able to overcome the challenges that you may face in the coming weeks and months.

Last Friday, all of the children from Reception to Primary 7 received a homework pack in anticipation of a school closure and this work was planned to cover a two week period. Thus the children should have started working on these packs on Wednesday and should continue to complete the work in them until next Friday (27/3/30).

Today every child from P1-P7 will receive a more substantive pack including activities to cover a four week period from Monday 30th March until Thursday 30th April. These packs have been separated into weekly sections and include: spelling, reading, comprehension, grammar, mathematics, topic and religion activities. A minimum of five Mathletics activities will also be set each week for your child(ren) and they can also engage in Live Maths activities. Other websites will be recommended to support your child(ren) with their learning. If your child is having difficulty with a specific concept I would encourage you to check 'Khan Academy' or 'You Tube' for videos to assist with their learning. All of the teachers have also included their email address so you can contact them if you have any queries or concerns.

We will not be uploading any further work on to our school website. We have decided instead to provide paper packs as we recognise the difficulties rural communities often experience with Wi-Fi access and the need for older children in households to have regular access to the internet. However your child(ren) is/are still encouraged to engage in online learning through Mathletics; recommended websites and Nessy. Twinkl are also offering free access to learning materials for families.

We have tried our best to include a variety of learning activities in these packs that ensure all children continue to learn and their previous learning is reinforced. Could I remind you that these packs are just a resource. How well they are used will determine how beneficial they will be.

As many of us prepare to work from home and manage our children's learning, alongside all the other things we have to deal with, I would recommend that you establish a routine for completing the planned

worked but also remember to be flexible. If the weather is good and the children are able to go outside and be active then please include outdoor activities in your routine or include your children in tasks around the house to develop their independence and life skills. Maybe engage the children in your work or something that both you and they may enjoy reading or learning about. Please also try to ensure that your child engages in a variety of activities and does not spend too much time on games consoles.

This school closure is for an indefinite period and hopefully the children will return to school before the end of the school year although this does seem unlikely. In the event of the school closure continuing beyond the end of April you will receive a second homework pack at the end of April (you will be contacted via text and on our school website) that will be for a further four week period. You will receive this pack as long as you return the reading books that have been included in this pack. Could you please ensure that you take good care of the books included as they will be needed for future learning. All of the teachers have recorded the books that have been sent home and if a book is not returned the school will have to be reimbursed for it.

I also realise that some parents are owed money for Breakfast/123/4 O'clock Clubs, afterschool activities or snack money that may have been paid until the end of the year. Some parents have also paid for swimming and school trips. Berni will have a record of these payments and all of the teachers will have a record of snack money. All families will be reimbursed before the end of the school year although if you would like to receive this money ASAP please email me (tmckee362@c2kni.net). Any family who may owe dinner money or other monies can pay the school when the children return, even if this is next year as Berni will also have a record of this. We will not be sending any bills home at this difficult time.

I would like to thank all the staff for all their hard work in putting these packs together in challenging circumstances. I would like to acknowledge the commitment of our Board of Governors especially our Chairperson, Mr Kevin Curran. I would also like to thank you, our families and school community, for all the support that you give to our school.

Finally, our children who have been brilliant. Their behaviour, manners and work ethic have all been excellent. School is very quiet without them. I know that they will be missing chatting and playing with their friends; participating in many of the activities they enjoy in school and working with our staff. To the Reception and Primary One children who had settled so well into school life; our Primary Four children who were preparing for their Holy Communion; some of our Primary Six children who are preparing for the Transfer assessment next year and of course our Primary Seven children who have had their final year interrupted and possibly cut short. We will ensure that we will overcome whatever difficulties we may face in the coming months and do all we can to ensure all children reintegrate back into school when that is announced. We will assist all children with their studies and particularly those who are interested in preparing for the transfer test. They will receive their first Transfer Pack after Easter. We will make sure that we have special celebrations as always for Holy Communion, Confirmation and of course leaving our school for ventures and experiences new. Take care and good luck to one and all!

Please contact me if you have any queries, concerns or suggestions.

Many Thanks,

Tomás Mc Kee

Tomás Mc Kee
Principal