



Ballylifford Primary School
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Friday 8th January 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. As you are probably now aware, the Education Minister has stated that primary schools will remain closed until the half term break in February which means our children will not be returning to school until Monday 22 February. With a new more contagious strain of COVID 19 spreading rapidly, this is a welcome announcement to ensure the health and safety of the whole community and it will be kept under review. We will keep you informed of any further decisions made by the Education Minister.

Please read the following information regarding Ballylifford Primary School.

- **Mon 11th Jan – Fri 12th Feb** Remote Learning for Year 1-Year 7 pupils via Seesaw and home learning packs.
- **Mon 15th – Fri 19th Feb** Mid Term break
- **Mon 22nd Feb** All pupils return to school for normal school day and face to face teaching will resume.

Remote Learning

We appreciate the inconvenience remote learning may cause but I am sure you understand this is entirely out of our control. Ballylifford PS is totally committed to making the children's home learning positive and enjoyable by providing as much guidance as possible. Going forward, it will be important that we continue to work together to support the children in their learning in the form of home learning packs and online learning via Seesaw. Teachers will upload daily activities on Seesaw which can be accessed by all pupils from 9:15am. Teachers will inform the pupils of the activities that should be completed and in what class book/booklet they must complete their activities. All completed work should be uploaded to Seesaw for teachers to mark and offer feedback during normal teaching hours 9am-4pm. The teacher will respond to your child's work in a timely manner; however, I ask for your patience and understanding if teachers do not reply on the day of upload. Any work uploaded after this time will be marked the next day.

We do not want families to feel overwhelmed by the work we send home or issue online. We fully appreciate and understand that every family situation is different and that some pupils will not be able to upload work onto Seesaw due to i.e working hours of parents etc

Teachers have provided parents with a realistic home learning timetable. We recommend that most activities be completed in the morning, but we also understand this will not always be possible. Therefore, flexibility is important for parents on how they wish to timetable their children's day. Remember a good routine if possible is essential for you and your child's emotional health and well-being.

Our school website has many online educational links and apps for pupils and parents to access to support home learning. We would encourage parents to use these website links to access additional learning resources and opportunities. Pupils should continue to read AR books, eBooks online, listen to audio books to develop all literacy skills. P3-P7 pupils should complete AR reading quizzes by logging on to the Accelerated Reader link in the class zone section. We would also encourage all parents to download the LIBBY App (linked to LIBRARIES NI) to access the 1000s of eBooks and Audiobooks available which you can download for free to support all reading and home learning. Education City tasks have been added for all year groups focusing on the key curriculum areas in Literacy and Numeracy. The Education City user guide in the parents' area on our school website.

Supervised Learning for Vulnerable children and the children of Key Workers

In considering an application for provision and if you need to avail of this service, please refer to the government guidelines and the definition of key workers. it is important to pay attention to the following points (adapted from <https://www.education-nigov.uk/general-guidance-covid-19-schools>)

Definitions: vulnerable children and key workers are available from the following link taken from DENI advice, 31 Dec 20

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-cross-departmental-covid-19-vulnerable-children-and-young-peoples-plan>)

- Following the most recent announcement, schools are to remain closed.
- This will mean supervised learning and no daily teaching of lessons.
- Pupils will be completing the same tasks as those at home.

Some organisational considerations:

- Supervised learning will run from 9am-2pm daily.
- School will be open from 8.45am and all children attending should be collected at 2pm to enable staff to attend to work submitted remotely.
- As the kitchen is not operational, children should bring a break, packed lunch and drink.
- Children are to wear full school uniform.
- Arrangements may change at short notice due to staff availability or unforeseen circumstances.

Please note that the survey on our school website **must** be completed if you need to avail of this service.

Whilst we find ourselves in challenging times, we would encourage our whole school community to embrace our motto along with our school values to help everyone through this difficult time and work together to make the most of opportunities available to us for the benefit of all the children. Please continue to follow all PHA advice, take care of yourselves and each other, always reassure and comfort your child, try to keep all conversations positive and praise them for everything they do. Even though they may not realise it now, they are developing many life experiences and skills.

All whole school communication will continue to be provided through our school website, Schools NI app and the school Twitter account. Seesaw communication will be used by the teacher and their class regards all home learning and if parents request any support or guidance for their child. Please remember to follow the Seesaw Guidelines for Parents that was previously included in Parental Permission and Agreement form.

If any parent should have a concern or query, please do not hesitate to contact the school by email info@ballylifford.cookstown.ni.sch.uk

Many thanks



Mr Ciaran McElroy
Principal

Definitions: vulnerable children and key workers

Taken from DENI advice, 31 Dec 20

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-cross-departmental-covid-19-vulnerable-children-and-young-peoples-plan>)

The definition of Vulnerable Children as set out in the cross-departmental Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan 2020 is:

- A child who has an assigned social worker because he or she is a child in need, in need of protection (or on the child protection register) or is a looked after child.
- A child in need includes young carers, children with disabilities, and children living in families where there is domestic abuse, substance abuse, and / or mental health difficulties.
- A child who is receiving support from, or has been referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- A child who has a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), a child who is accessing EOTAS, or a child who normally accesses Education Nurture Units.
- A child who is 'on-the-edge' of receiving support from children's social services.
- A child who is in need, including in need of protection, but whose need is not known to statutory services.
- A child who is not known to statutory or voluntary and community support services but who is vulnerable because their family is under increased pressure due to Covid-19 related circumstances.
- A young person who was previously a looked after child, whether or not they are receiving support from statutory services.
- A child who has been placed for adoption.
- Asylum seeking and refugee children and children whose parents have no recourse to public funds.

Key workers are defined as:

- Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector;
- Education and childcare. This includes pre-school and teaching staff, social workers, youth workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response;
- Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles;
- Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response;
- Utilities, and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, banking and waste disposal;
- Financial Services - This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure);
- Food and other necessary goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g. hygiene, medical, etc.);
- Retail. This includes those workers who have been working throughout the pandemic in food retail, for example, and will now extend to those working in other retail businesses permitted to operate by the Executive from June 2020;
- Other workers essential to delivering key public services such as the National Crime Agency; and Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response