

2nd February 2021

Dear Parents

We are now into our fifth week of remote learning. I am so impressed with the work the children are producing and the level of engagement each day. Thank you for supporting the staff by leading your children through the work set each day. We really do appreciate your level of commitment to your child's education and we fully appreciate that, like ourselves, many of you are still working and trying to home school as well. By monitoring children's engagement in daily tasks we are able to see who is having difficulties. We also have to complete weekly attendance sheets for DE based on this engagement. If you or your child are ill, please let us know and we will do all we can to help you and will understand why work is not completed.

The work your child has been assigned is differentiated to suit their needs. Their teacher will assign their own literacy and numeracy group work according to their ability. If your child is struggling with a particular aspect or if you need some additional support, please email your child's teacher and they will be happy to assist you.

If you do not have the materials for certain activities, the staff will understand. Please do not feel you have to go out and buy materials for art/crafts or baking. Many of these tasks are additional tasks that the staff have set for the children.

If you have a problem printing any necessary worksheet, please telephone school or email your child's class teacher and we can print these for you and leave them in the porch. We appreciate that printers can breakdown or run out of ink, so in an emergency we can assist you. Please note the worksheet may only be a guide and some children just copy work into their books or complete it online.

Please remember to upload your child's completed work and then 'hand in' so the teacher knows you have completed your work and it is ready for marking. If you have a problem getting your child logged on to Google Classroom at any stage, please contact school.

NURSERY

Remember that for nursery pupils your daily activities are on the website, under **Pupils' Area-Home Learning** (remember the password is apple18).

CONTINUATION OF REMOTE LEARNING

Education Minister Peter Weir MLA has announced that in light of the current crisis in public health, the Northern Ireland Executive has agreed that schools will continue to provide remote learning **until at least 5 March**. This will extend the previously announced reopening date by two weeks after the February half-term break.

It is his priority to return to full time face-to-face teaching for everyone as soon as possible. The aim would be to start face to face teaching on **8th March**, subject to the prevailing public health and scientific advice. This is being reviewed mid-February and I will inform you if there are any further changes.

REMOTE LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking the time to complete our remote learning survey. We really value your opinions and it will assist us with monitoring and evaluating our current practice. If you haven't already completed the questionnaire, please click on this link or copy it into your browser to access the questionnaire <https://forms.gle/Z9TnLPwxPu5GnzhWA>. Please complete it by **Wednesday 3rd February at 3pm**.

HOLIDAYS

Half Term Holiday Monday 15th- 19th February

The children, the staff and I'm sure all parents will be glad of a well-deserved week off remote learning.

St Patrick's Day - Wednesday 17th March

Easter holidays - 29th March - 9th April

GOOGLE MEETS

The children really seem to be enjoying the weekly Google Meets. I know it may not suit everyone but it is great to see the majority of pupils participating. It is a great way for the children to keep in touch and to see and hear from their teacher and each other. The children have had show and tell sessions, art lessons, games, read stories and had lessons explained during this time. So please do try to link into them each week. The day, time and the link will be posted on their Google Classroom page.

RETURNING READING BOOKS AND COLLECTION OF PACKS

We are asking that all reading books that were given out in your child's previous pack are returned on **Thursday 11th February** to enable us to quarantine them before sending out in the new packs.

All reading books should be returned in a sealed bag with your child's name and class on it so it can be returned to the appropriate teacher.

Each teacher will put together a pack with resources for their pupils (N-P7) to use alongside their online learning platform, for after half term. Please keep these resources safe as the teachers will refer to these, please do not just work your way through a booklet without direction. Please look after these carefully and return all school books when you come back to school.

Below is a timetable for drop off and collection, it has been arranged according to your surname. Please drive around to the front door and a member of staff will pass you a box to deposit your reading book bag in or will pass you your new pack. Please note drop off and collection are on two different days. There is no need to get out of your car. If you cannot attend at the allocated time, please contact school to arrange an alternative time. If you are walking, please come to the front door. Remember to wear a face mask.

Family surname beginning with	Drop off reading books Thursday 11 th February	Pack Collection Time Monday 22 nd February
A-F	10.00am	10.00am
G-L	10.15am	10.15am
M-P	10.30am	10.30am
R-W	10.45am	10.45am

STAFF RETURNING

We are delighted to be welcoming Mrs Boyd, our classroom assistant and Mrs McCormack, our P1/2 Thursday and P2/3 Friday teacher, back to their roles this week, following a period of illness. A special thank you to Miss Barnes, Miss Bothwell, Miss Crooks, Miss Agnew and Mrs Campbell who were excellent substitute staff in their absence.

NURSERY AND P1 ADMISSION

The EA online portal is now closed and applications are being processed. Parents of target age nursery and P1 pupils will be notified of places in late April. Please remember to upload any supporting documents through the portal by 5th February.

POST PRIMARY TRANSFER

Please note that the application process for post primary school places will be conducted online from this year forward. An area has been created on the EA website for materials related to Digital Admissions. Please click on this link for more information and videos that explain the process <https://www.eani.org.uk/digitaladmissions>.

The admission criteria for post primary schools is published today also.

EA online post primary applications will open at **12 noon on 1st March and close at 4pm on 16th March 2021**. An application will have to be submitted by parents for all P7 pupils, except for those with a statement of special educational needs, EA SEN will deal with these pupils' transfer.

Please check out post primary schools' websites to view their criteria, prospectus, virtual school tours and to get a general overview of the school. Speak with your child about transfer and Miss Barnes and Mrs Allen will be preparing them for the move through various class activities. Parents will be notified of their child's placement on 19th June.

Any questions, please email the P7 staff or myself and we will do our best to help you.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME

I am pleased to tell you that work has started in the school grounds to increase our car parking spaces. A few years ago we requested increased car parking and a pedestrian walkway, from the back gate, around the side of the school. This will enable parents safe access to the nursery and the front door. We will also be getting a drop off and pick up area to the left of the main school gates, this will prevent cars dropping pupils at the front doors and blocking the one-way system around the roundabout, at drop off and pick up times. This work started on Monday and will be completed hopefully in early March. Please be careful if you are using the school grounds as there will be a lot of machinery and vehicles around the grounds.

NEW OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

We have ordered a new outdoor classroom. This will be situated in the back playground and will be used by all pupils for outdoor learning. This has been funded by Shared Education and will be well used for lessons outdoors. This will hopefully be in place as soon as possible.

LITERACY SUPPORT

Please click on the link to access the Literacy Service Newsletter. The content of the newsletter is for all parents and children, who at some point in their school career, may have experienced difficulties with literacy. This issue focuses on reading with lots of useful, practical ideas and resources to use at home. It also contains details on how the newsletter can be read out loud using assistive technology (**Texthelp Read & Write and Immersive Reader**) and provides instructions for this. Please copy and paste the link below into the Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge browser to view at home and explore this amazing new resource for Northern Ireland pupils, parents and schools.

<https://sway.office.com/IOWgF2uVh2jGguBv?ref=Link>

SUPERVISION OF KEY WORKER/VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Our school remains open for '**Supervised Learning**' for Vulnerable Pupils and the children of key workers **ONLY**. The definitions for these groupings can be found at www.deni.gov.uk.

If you wish to avail of this service, please complete the form on our school website by **Thursday at 2pm** each week (password- key).

The Department of Education have been very clear that **this is not face to face teaching** and these pupils will do the same activities that all pupils in their class will be doing at home. Pupils will have access to an iPad to obtain their daily tasks. Given the government's current stay at home message, parents are reminded that this provision **should only be considered when all other childcare options have been exhausted**, to facilitate parents getting to their workplace. This should be used for the minimum amount of time and days necessary.

The staff, as always, are willing to help those parents with a genuine need for childcare but we also have to continue to protect the safety of the school staff and our whole school community.

This group of pupils will be a 'bubble', so please be aware that if we get a positive case within the bubble, all of the children and staff will have to self-isolate.

Please **do not** send your child to school for supervision if they or someone in your house is unwell or have Covid 19 symptoms. A reminder also, that all parents must wear a face covering at drop off and pick up times and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

REMOTE LEARNING DEVICES AND WIFI

I applied through the EA Loan Scheme for devices and Wi-Fi for pupils to use for remote learning. We have been allocated a small number of devices and Wi-Fi provision and are awaiting delivery. These are primarily allocated to FSMs pupils in P4 and P7 but may be rolled out to children in other year groups also. These are loan devices and a loan agreement has to be signed and the device is expected to be returned. If you feel your child/family would benefit from either of these please email me (jmcmillan521@c2kni.net) and I will provide further details.

STAY SAFE COMPETITION

Thank you to all the pupils who entered the competition. The standard was so high and it was very difficult to choose one winner in each class. The winners received a certificate entitling them to take a day off their literacy or numeracy. Congratulations to our five winners, Billy Gray P1/2, Emily Sproule P2/3, Jay Faulkner P4/5, Annabel Thompson P5/6 and Jake Brown P6/7. The posters can all be viewed in the website news and on Google Classroom.

Again, thank you for your support at this difficult time. The staff are working so hard to ensure our pupils do not fall behind with their curriculum. We appreciate that this situation we all find ourselves in, is not easy.

Philippians 4 v13 "I can do all things through him who gives me strength" reminds us that as pupils, parents and staff, God will give us the strength to get through this difficult time and things will get better.

Please remember if you need help, contact any of the staff by email or phone the school and we will do all we can to help you. We really miss having all the children in school and are looking forward to when we can have them all back in the classroom.

J McMillan

Principal



