**St Brigid’s PS**

**Castle Street**

**Ballymoney**

**BT53 6JX**

**Principal: Mr Kieran O’Neill**

**koneill580@c2kni.net**

**Tel: 028 2766 2664**

**Fax: 028 2766 5657**

**Friday, 20 March 2020**

Dear Parents

The last week has been unlike anything we in St Brigid’s have ever seen before, we have seen amazing support and togetherness and we have felt emotionally drained and anxious about the current situation. This is an unprecedented time for us all. Most importantly, it is a time that our children must be cared for and looked after like never before. Being a child is a wonderful time and being a child you have everything to look forward to in the future. Whilst no-one will forget what is happening right now we will rebound for the children as soon as we can and continue to make their childhood as special and wonderful time for them.

As a school I cannot be any prouder of how everyone has worked together and coped in this most difficult and surreal set of circumstances. As a school we have tried to get as much right as we possibly could and whilst that may not have been everything all I can say is we tried our best.

Our children in the early stages of this have been incredible. To all the children at home, all the teachers and staff say a BIG ‘HELLO!’ and to do everything that you can at home to make life easier for everyone. The message that we hear every Friday – BE KIND, BE HELPFUL, BE CARING, SMILE AND MAKE OTHERS LAUGH, TRY YOUR BEST and above all have FAITH that this will be overcome. I know the Year 7 children will miss out potentially on the end to their school life at St Brigid’s. We hold out hope at this stage that we will see you all again before the end of June. Failing that we will find a way to say farewell to our Year 7 children. St Brigid’s PS will be here long after this and we will look forward to everyone coming back to school together. Year 7s we will see you all again, that’s a promise!!

Today I have issued a statement from our collective body of the Coleraine Principals’ Association regarding the support we can give to Key Workers’ children in school over the coming period. We want to be able to support this but currently have little or no guidance on how to do this. If any guidance is issued in the next hours or over the weekend we will endeavour to communicate that to you. The pace at which this situation is evolving is staggering and very difficult to keep people informed.

As parents, you are the most important thing in your child’s life. We work with you to support and develop your children in many ways and we care deeply about your children, but you are their world. At this time the message from me is that the children are safer at home, away from a setting where they are coming in to contact with another group of children and adults. For your information, as yet we have not been issued with any protective clothing or materials to keep the school environment safe. This is a key issue for us and until we are sure of the safety of this environment – we will remain closed.

This situation has thrown your child’s world into complete chaos and I must stress at this stage that you must not feel that you will be able to do everything in terms of keeping learning going for your child. May I suggest that just being a parent may be enough at this stage. You are not home schooling your child. We have provided some guidance on what things you can do. If you choose to do many other things, then so be it.

As a school we are here to offer advice and support. You will have the teachers’ email addresses and a contact for me too. If you need to make contact please do so.

I hope that this situation passes and we are all safe and well. We will be back here at the first opportunity and look forward to working with you all.

Thank you all for your support and understanding in this. The children, staff and school community are our priority and we will not compromise the health and safety of anyone associated with St Brigid’s PS.

In terms of social distancing and attempting to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community, I reiterate:

**IF YOU CAN KEEP YOU CHILDREN OUT OF THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT PLEASE DO SO!!!!**

Kind Regards

Kieran O’Neill (Principal)

Mr G Doran (Chair of BoG)