**St Brigid’s PS**

**Castle Street**

**Ballymoney**

**BT53 6JX**

**Principal: Mr Kieran O’Neill**

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**Friday, 20 March 2020**

Dear Parents

**Coleraine Primary Principals’ Group**

***Statement regarding supporting the children of key workers. 20th March 2020***

At approximately 5pm last evening, the minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir, MLA, made a statement outlining how schools will close from the end of the school day, today, Friday 20th March, however, he has asked schools to open with skeleton staff on Monday 23rd March to support identified key workers.   
  
You are receiving this letter as your child’s primary school is represented, by your principal, on the Coleraine Primary Principal’s Group. Many principals on this group have agreed to follow a coordinated response to ensure that we support the children of key workers in a similar way across our schools. Some schools may be in a position to provide more support, depending on the numbers of staff still available to work.   
  
Firstly, it is vitally important that schools are aware how many children of key workers will need to avail of the school. With this in mind, if you feel you are an identified key worker, please make contact with your child’s primary school (by the email address listed below) by 3 pm on Friday 20th March to inform school if you are in need of a place for your child/children and how you meet the key worker’s definition. If schools feel they can offer your child a place safely, they will be in touch. Our position on this may well be ever evolving. **This may mean that we won’t be in a position to provide this offer from Monday 23 March. We may need a few more days to organise this provision. If/when we are in a position to be able to offer this provision we will let parents know.**  
***This is a procedure to be followed on a daily basis to ensure staffing is adequate.***   
  
Before contacting school please pay particular attention to the following points. Schools will not be able to operate a ‘normal’ school day. Many of our schools are already operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time.

**POINTS TO CONSIDER:**  
A list of key workers, issued by the Department of Education is listed overleaf.

* Only children with **BOTH** parents working as key workers, and BOTH PARENTS OUT AT WORK AT THE SAME TIME should consider attending school. In single parent families, the individual parent with full time responsibility MUST be a key worker.
* **If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family members, friends etc. Please try and use schools as a last resort. This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance.**
* Initially, schools will not have breakfast club and afterschool club services available. Each school’s normal opening and closing time will apply-Eg: 9am -2pm, 9am-3pm
* **Children attending school will NOT be required to wear uniform.** Please be advised that schools will be performing childcare duties, not teaching. Not all teachers are currently available to teach specific year groups. Teachers involved in this childcare will NOT be available to provide online/remote learning to other children/classes.   
  We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your child to school.   
  Please also remember PHA advice must be followed at all times and children/families must follow all self-isolation advice.   
  Schools will also follow PHA advice should anyone display symptoms or take unwell during attendance.   
  Obviously it goes without saying, if your ONLY option is to send your child to school, we will look after them to support you in your important role.

***Coleraine Primary Principals’ Group***

**School email contact:** [**koneill580@c2kni.net**](mailto:koneill580@c2kni.net)

**List of key workers as outlined in information to schools on Thursday 19th March 2020**

Please work with us to ensure schools operate with a limited number of children and staff.

**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 nursery and teaching staff, social 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, services and waste disposal

**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)

Other workers essential to delivering key public services

Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response

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