**St Brigid’s PS**

**Castle Street**

**Ballymoney**

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**Principal: Mr Kieran O’Neill**

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**Monday, 08 February 2021**

Dear Parents

As always the health, safety and well-being of pupils, staff and our wider school community continues to be of the highest importance at St Brigid’s PS. The uncertainty and concern with regards to Covid-19 is something we are all too aware of and as a result of this the **Department of Education and Stormont Executive has informed us that, we are required to provide remote learning at home to the pupils rather than face-to-face teaching in school, until Friday 5th March 2021.** We still hope that remote learning and the removal of face-to-face teaching will last no longer than necessary, and therefore will remain under review by the Executive.

We hope you are all coping ok and have now settled into a routine with the children. We fully understand the challenges, as home isn’t seen as a classroom environment, it’s the place you enjoy family downtime and where the children get to play and relax. We have almost reached half term and we are so impressed with all the work the children are doing at home. It is so apparent many of you are keeping learning in a routine and ensuring the children keep focused on their tasks. Please don’t put yourself under pressure, even if the children do literacy and numeracy tasks and some reading, they will hold their own and not fall behind. So if you have a tough day, pull the plug and start again the following morning.

**We will continue to use our established remote learning approaches, with learning being supported via SEESAW or TEAMS alongside the hard copy materials that have been prepared.**

Staff have been in school planning ahead for this extended period of school closure. In order to supplement the remote learning, **hard copy packs will be available for a parent/guardian to collect on Friday 12th February between 9.30 am and 3.00 pm**. The packs will be useful to those who have more than 1 child and shared access to devices. Please return any reading materials that were issued with the first pack as new reading materials will not be issued until they are returned.

The process for collecting packs on Friday 12th February will be as follows.

1. Please park in the chapel carpark
2. Entry to the school will be via the main playground door following the red route.
3. Please wait at the door and someone will get you the pack for your child (and others if requested)
4. Press the buzzer for someone to come to the door.
5. To avoid crowds do not come as a large group and do not bring the children. We would prefer one person. Please wear a face covering when on the school premises.
6. If you can collect for others when you are in, please do so to limit the numbers coming to the school. (please agree in advance with parents)
7. We anticipate minimal contact and would request that you take the packs and not to dwell for conversation.

Thank you for your co-operation in advance of collecting the packs.

During this period of closure each class teacher be available between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm on Seesaw or Teams. Activities, instructions and support will be available during this time. Any work completed can be sent through to the class teacher for marking. In some cases, the class teacher will post the answers to activities into your group. Similarly, you can contact me and my email address is also included with this letter.

We have kept the lines of communication as open as possible for parents throughout this period. The teachers have been in contact via Seesaw, Teams, email and in some cases phone calls. We hope to continue that, with the opportunity to have parent interviews after half-term. More details of how this will operate will be shared with you soon. During this period of extended closure any additional information from the school will be posted on the website. A text message will be sent to you if there are any updates. Please check the website regularly for updates.

**Mid Term Break 15 – 19 February 2021. The school will be closed all week.**

It is important to thank all the staff for their hard work and dedication throughout this school year, especially with the challenges of remote teaching since the beginning of January. Our children are truly blessed to have teachers and assistants who want the very best for them.

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. Have a lovely half term break and try to squeeze in some of that all-important family time. It is essential to keep praising the children, as we know they are all trying their very best every day and reassure them that things will improve and hopefully we will be back to school soon.

Kind Regards

Kieran O’Neill

Principal