**St Brigid’s PS**

**Castle Street**

**Ballymoney**

**BT53 6JX**

**Principal: Mr Kieran O’Neill**

**koneill580@c2kni.net**

**Tel: 028 2766 2664**

**Monday, 01 March 2021**

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope that you and the children are all keeping well during this, hopefully final, period of lockdown. The Department of Education and the NI Executive have decided that there is going to be a phased approach with regards to a return to school for the children.

Below is information with regards to the first phase of this return for the children in Year 1-3 and Class A (Year 1-3 children)

**PHASE 1**

**Monday 8 March to Friday 19 March**

Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Class A (Yr1-3)

**School Closed Wednesday 17 March (St Patrick’s Day)**

As in term 1, the children will be in class ‘bubbles’ throughout the school day and interaction/mixing with other classes will be restricted. The children may pass other children in corridors or when going to the toilet, however, this will be deemed low risk as the contact is not prolonged.

The emphasis, as the younger children return to school, will be on reassuring the children and parents and on supporting children to reconnect socially, build positive relationships and engage enthusiastically with learning as they return to the school environment. In particular, for our youngest children, teachers know the importance of providing opportunities to be actively involved in practical, challenging play-based learning in a stimulating environment. The vision is for a balanced day where children are able to play, are ready to learn and feel able to re-connect.

**Arrival Times:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year Group | Arrival |
| Year 3 | 8.45 am |
| Year 2 & Class A | 9.00 am |
| Year 1 | 9.15 am |

**Departure Times:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year Group | Departure Times |
| Year 1,2,3 & CA | 2.00 pm |

**Family groups:**

The eldest sibling identifies the **family arrival time** e.g. if the eldest child in the family is in Year 3 all the children in the family arrive at 8.45 am or if the eldest child in the family is in Year 2 all the children in the family will arrive at 9.00 am.

**Procedures for arrival and departure:**

All arrivals and departures via the chapel car park and gate. Entry into and departure from school for the children is the same process as term 1.

**All children should be accompanied by one adult only.**

Do not congregate around the gate at arrival and departure times. Please wait in cars or well back to ensure social distancing. Please wear a face covering when on the school premises.

**Exceptions:** (arrival and departure via the front door)

* Children arriving by bus and taxi.
* Anyone requiring disabled access.
* Children in Class A (arrival time 9.00 am and will be greeted by a member of staff from CA)

There will be no access into the school for parents from the main playground.

A designated area will be in place for parents to drop children off and leave the playground.

**Bringing items to and from school:**

* **No school bag** will be required on a daily basis
* **Packed lunch** should be brought in a **lunch box that can be cleaned daily** or in a **disposable bag** (clearly marked with the child’s name) that will be put in the bin in school after use.
* Any **money** for dinners must be in a **small plastic bag or envelope** (clearly marked with the child’s name)
* A **water bottle** (clearly marked with your child’s name) **can be** brought in to school
* Personal resources for each child may already be in school. If they were taken home, you may send them in with your child on the first day.
* **Please return any school reading materials or text books that were sent home with the learning packs**
* A coat may be worn into school.
* There will be limited resources being sent home from school on a daily basis.
* The children will **not need** their **own hand sanitiser**.

**Access to/Contacting school:**

Anyone requiring access to school or needing to contact the school must do so in the following ways:-

* Access to main office via front door only after 9.15 am (when all children are in class). This will be on a one in one out basis. Socially distanced waiting will be along the windows of the canteen. Hand sanitiser will be available at the door and a one-way system will be in operation.
* Any urgent messages for the school or class teacher:

School phone No. 028 27662664

School email: info@stbrigidsps.ballymoney.ni.sch.uk

School website contact form: <http://www.stbrigidspsballymoney.com/contact-us>

**Return to school – Year 4-7 and Class B**

**The school will remain closed for children in Year 4-4 and CB.**

Those children who will be waiting to return to school, will continue with the remote learning that has been in place up to now. We will communicate to you any details with regards to the return of all children to school when it has been announced by the Department of Education.

**Additional Learning Packs** (3 weeks to Easter – March 15 to April 1 2021) will be available for collection via the chapel car park and the playground door from Monday 15 March 9.30 am – 3.00 pm.

Remote learning has been very successful and the engagement has been very high. The children have continued to learn and it is important that this is recognised both at home and in school upon their return. It is very important that at home and in school we are careful in the language that we use around the children with regards to learning. This whole experience has been an anxious and stressful time for many of the children. It is important that we don’t increase that anxiety and worry about learning by suggesting that there are, ‘gaps in learning’ or by saying ‘we need to make up for lost learning’. We must work together to create a positive feeling about every child’s return to school.

**The education of the children is and always has been about a partnership between the home and school. This has never been more true than the way we have worked together throughout the pandemic.**

**Term 2 School Closures**

St Patrick’s Day Wednesday 17 March.

Easter Holidays Friday 2 April to Friday 9 April Inclusive.

**Sacraments 2021**

Dates for Holy Communion, Confirmation and First Confession have not been set yet. Once an announcement has been made with regards to the reopening of the chapel we will be able to confirm the dates. The plan is for the Sacraments to take place during this academic year.

Take care and keep safe.

Yours sincerely

Kieran P O’Neill

Principal