



St. Joseph's P.S. Galbally

Learning, Friendship, Respect

RE: Covid-19

13th March 2020

Dear Parents,

I am aware that there is understandable concern and indeed some confusion regarding the Coronavirus given the statements from the First and Deputy First Ministers over the past two days, and the advice being given to schools on dealing with a potential or confirmed outbreak.

This letter is to assure you that we are as well prepared as possible to deal with any situation that might arise in the coming weeks.

All schools are being advised in relation to the Coronavirus by the *Department of Education* in conjunction with the *Public Health Agency*. This advice is being updated as and when necessary in light of any new information that the Department of Health becomes aware of.

The information given on the PHA website does go on to detail how schools should manage a suspected or confirmed case of the Coronavirus and we will be guided by health experts if we are confronted with such a scenario.

PLEASE NOTE - the clear advice for someone who presents with the common symptoms of this virus (cough, fever, shortness of breath) is **NOT** to attend the GP or hospital but to telephone the GP for advice. **Any pupil feeling unwell, showing any cold or flu symptoms should stay at home, seek medical advice and not return to school for at least 7 days.**

I would encourage you to use the link below to source the most recent advice for schools for your own information and would emphasise that this is a very fluid situation and thus the advice may change frequently.

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<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus#situation-in-northern-ireland>

In the meantime, we are taking all reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of any viruses or bugs, including the following:

- 1) We would ask that all pupils, where possible, have and use their own hand sanitisers and have an ample supply of tissues. Our cleaning staff are disinfecting door handles, keyboards etc. daily in addition to their normal cleaning routines.
- 2) During this period we wish to **limit** visitors to school:
 - a. Parents/visitors should not enter classrooms.
 - b. Visitors/parents will be kept at the front door and asked to sanitize their hands as soon as they enter.
 - c. Visitors/parents, where possible, are not permitted beyond the secretary's office.
- 3) Fr. Moore has advised that all Sunday masses are suspended, as is Confirmation. This is also likely to impact on First Penance and possibly First Communion ceremonies.
- 4) Friday 20th March was scheduled as a half day, but with the cancellation of Confirmation, school will now remain open as normal with the usual collection arrangements, unless the situation changes in the interim.
- 5) Teachers and staff are currently preparing packs for children in the likely event that schools here are forced to close due to.
 - a. Pupils will be expected to complete any work set unless they, themselves, become ill. I would urge parents/guardians to monitor this and ensure it happens.
 - b. These packs will be Literacy and Mathematics based.
- 6) It is also worth noting that the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Dungannon has been cancelled.

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- 7) Over the St. Patrick's break, the school website (www.stjosephspsgalbally.com) will be updated to include a dedicated section in relation to specific school measures being taken in relation to **Covid-19**



- 8) In the event that school closes, we will also be adding a new '**Online Learning**' page to the school website over the St. Patrick's break:
- On this page, children in P4 – P7 will have access to the school login for **Mathletics** and **Accelerated Reader**.
 - NESSY** continues to be available for parents in P2 and P3 who have availed of the subscription.
 - P4 – P7 will be asked to access **Accelerated Reading quizzes** at home – usually, Accelerated Reader quizzes can only be completed in school, but in the event school closes, we will activate 'out-of-school' access.
 - P3 – P7 children can access **Mathletics** at home at any time. If children are unaware of their username and/or password, their teacher will provide it to them. Teachers will assign work for the children to do on Mathletics in the event that school closes.
 - On this page, you will also find links to some excellent learning apps that can be using on both Ios/iPhone/iPad and Android devices.
 - P6 and P7 pupils will be able to access online learning by logging into **MySchool** on this page, and making use of the **C2K Newsdesk** and **Microsoft Teams** platforms.

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Communication

Communication with you as parents is of paramount importance at this time, and we will continue to communicate with you in a variety of way, including:

- 1) School Texting Service
- 2) School Website www.stjosephspsgalbally.com
- 3) School's Social Media Accounts on Twitter and Facebook
- 4) School Website App
 - a. On your phone's app store, look up 'Schools NI' and download the app
 - b. Once you have done this, search for our school and you should receive automatic messages from school when they are released.



In the event of closure all information will primarily be through the school text service. At any stage I can be contacted by email: hmeenagh698@c2kni.net.

By following the guidance, I hope that we, at St. Joseph's Primary School, can protect pupils, colleagues, parents and the wider community.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh Meenagh
Principal

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