



St. Joseph's Primary School
42 Castle Street
Lisburn
BT274XE

'Being the best that we can be'

12 March 2020

Dear Parents,

We are following the development of the COVID-19 virus (Coronavirus) through the UK and Ireland. We are also following advice from the Public Health Agency (PHA), Department of Education (DE), Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Education Authority (EA).

At this time there is a lot of speculation. However, with current guidance we are maintaining an 'open as usual' approach. We are constantly reminding the children to reduce the risk of spreading germs through the "catch it, bin it, kill it" message of sneezing and disposing tissues in the bin and through the regular and thorough handwashing with soap and hot water. Soap supplies are monitored throughout the course of the school day and replenished accordingly.

As this situation now moves into what the Government calls the 'delay stage' (**Government definition of delay - Using 'social distancing' tactics such as closing schools and postponing or cancelling large-scale gatherings to delay the spread of the virus while a vaccine is not available**) I do envisage issues for the safe operation of the school site on a daily basis moving forward. We have contingency plans in place, aligned with projected official communication from the authorities listed above, to continue the smooth running of the school whether open or closed.

All communication with parents will be through our text messaging service and through the use of the emails that you have supplied school with. If either of your phone numbers (1st contact) or email has changed recently, please contact the school office as soon as possible.

Finally, if pupils, parents or their family members develop symptoms consistent with Covid-19 they should be kept at home and contact should be made with your GP or by using the NHS helpline by calling 111. If any pupils, parents or family members are tested for the Coronavirus we would be grateful if you would contact the school office and leave a message with Ms Gibson, Mrs Fleming or Mr Murray.

Yours faithfully,

Declan Murray
Principal



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