



Coagh Primary School

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Covid 19 Letter to Parents (2nd October 2020)

Dear Parent,

This is an information letter outlining how we as a school will make decisions over the next few weeks and months. It also contains useful reference points that will be of benefit to you i.e. medical information and who to contact in the instance of a positive Covid Test. Please take a few minutes to read it carefully.

Northern Ireland Context

As has been well documented recently the community transmission rate of Covid 19 in Northern Ireland there is very high. This means that it is inevitable there will be cases of Covid 19 within our local area and greater school community. With this in mind we feel it is important to share some information with you that may be of benefit over the coming weeks and months.



Decision Making Process

As a school we always contact the Public Health Agency which has a dedicated support service for schools when we are faced with concerns about Covid 19. This provides us with the most up to date guidance which is consistent across all schools in Northern Ireland.



There will be times when the advice they give school is to have certain classes self isolate because of contact with a pupil/staff member who has tested positive for Covid 19 and this will always be communicated to the parents/guardians of those children directly affected in that class. The rest of the school community will receive a more general letter saying that a class is self isolating.

At other times the advice given to school will be that no communication should be sent to parents/guardians because the pupil/staff member/parent who tested positive for Covid 19 does not carry a risk to the rest of the school community.

We understand that our community like others is 'close knit' and over the coming weeks and months as the inevitable Covid 19 cases rise, many of you will become aware of members of the community who have or will have tested positive and may be self isolating or who will require hospital treatment etc.

Any decision by the school to share or not share information with the wider school community is never taken without the guidance of the Education Authority and Public Health Agency. In the interests of transparency, we wanted to share the decision making process with you so that you are aware that the safety of our pupils and staff is of paramount importance and that this will always be at the centre of any decision made.

Confidentiality

To protect confidentiality and maintain the integrity of our staff, please do not ask us to comment on individual cases that you may have heard or hear about in the local community. As mentioned earlier any decision to share or not share information with the greater school community will be taken following consultation with the Public Health Agency and with the safety of all our school community at its heart.



Pupil Welfare

All our pupils have settled into school fantastically well over the last five weeks and school continues to be the 'constant' in our pupils lives in an ever changing landscape with continual revision of restrictions and guidance affecting all aspects of daily life.



With this in mind we would strongly encourage you not to have conversations within easy 'earshot' of your children which might increase their anxiety levels e.g. 'there are loads of people in the area with Covid' or 'that person has Covid and look how ill they became'. Please treat the subject with sensitivity and share practical advice such as hand washing, coughing into a tissue etc. Sometimes it is best to 'let children be children' and not have them worrying about issues outside of their control.

Contacting the school

Communication with school continues to be vitally important in this climate and if you have any concerns about what you should do in certain situations please either ring the school office or email me directly at ibayne452@c2kni.net during out of school hours and we will respond as quickly as possible to your concern.



Additional Information

Our Medical Information page under the Parents Tab of the school website contains the most up to date information leaflets on what to do in certain circumstances and our advice is always if you are in doubt please contact your local health professional as they are best placed to advise you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr I. Bayne
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