

Covid-19 and Nursery – January 2021.

I am sure you, like me, have been trying to make sense of the recent developments in public health and how these will impact on our children and community. On Thursday 1,929 new cases of Coronavirus were confirmed, 11 more deaths and a total of 8,228 new cases recorded in the previous seven days. Our hospitals are at capacity and ambulance services stretched to the limit. We are all subject to restrictions which are aimed towards bringing the infection rate down and protecting both the NHS and our communities.

In the light of this, the Education Minister made several announcements through Twitter and News channels. These included closing Primary and Post Primary schools except for some children, but to keep Nursery Schools open. This was then communicated to school Principals on New Years Eve. Throughout this crisis, we have sought to remain open and to continue to provide the best experiences we can for your children. We have sought to find a balance between safety, fun, learning and “normality”. Thank you so much for your kind and encouraging comments which have recognised the work which we do here.

As a parent, as well as a teaching Principal, I want to assure you that we will continue to do all that we can for your children. We now need to be even more aware of Health and Safety for everyone. We know that you, as parents, will understand the unique nature of Nursery Education; the “hands on” learning needed, and the inevitable risks associated. Social distancing is impractical for 3-4-year olds. Unfortunately, coronavirus remains a significant threat to everyone’s Health and Wellbeing in the community.

We, as a Nursery School community, are not immune from this. This is an extremely difficult time for families, children and our community. For all of us, there are significant worries as well as pressures of balancing work, finance, childcare, home life and often care for others in our “bubbles”. As the Health Minister and others have said recently, the actions we take will impact on others –we are all in this together. [Health and Safety must be everyone’s top priority.](#)

Each family will be aware of their own particular circumstances, vulnerable members etc, and will need to make decisions based on that. On Monday 4th January, School will be closed for children as we have been directed to plan and prepare for any new requirements as regards safety. We will also prepare more home learning materials for children whose parents would prefer that they stay at home due to present circumstances. (*Children will be recorded as **learning from home**, rather than **absent from School***). Resources will be posted on SNS website. **Please confirm via text messaging service if your preferred option is Home Learning at this time.** Some have done this already.

Unless there are further changes, we then plan to re-open on Tuesday 5th January. Could I once again remind everyone that adults should wear [face coverings](#) while leaving /collecting children at school. Please remember to [maintain socially distance](#) while waiting and, most importantly of all, to [keep children at home and arrange testing](#) if they, or ANYONE ELSE in the household have symptoms. Symptoms of Covid19 are: [high temperature, dry continuous coughing, loss of/change to sense of taste or smell](#). We will continue to be vigilant in school too –thank you for your co-operation and patience in these ever-changing circumstances.

S. Gillespie – Principal.