



# The Wee Friday Note

## Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021



**“For it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself.”**  
(Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol)

Dear Parents,

Before sharing the usual sort of Friday Note information, I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support for our school over the last year. Together, we have come through a very stressful and challenging twelve months. In fact, the past two years have been incredibly difficult and unfortunately it looks like the New Year might be very challenging.

None of us know what January will look like or the impact the Omicron Variant will have. If there is any change to the plan that children will restart school on Thursday 6th January 2022, I will of course try and give parents as much notice as possible. If schools were to remain closed (worst case scenario), Cregagh PS would return to its Home-Learning Model of work packs being provided for pupils and backed-up by some online learning through SeeSaw. **Please make sure school has your most up-to-date mobile phone number (tell the school office if it's changed) and you have a working SeeSaw account (if you don't get in touch with your child's teacher).**

We are now into the last run-up to Christmas in school. It is more important than ever that should someone in your house test positive for Covid, or your child shows any Covid-symptoms, **you do not send them into school.** In these circumstances, children must be taken for a proper PCR (Lateral Flow does not count – see poster attached) and they do not attend school until the test's outcome is known and shared with school. Please don't take any unnecessary risks such as sending sick children into school ... everyone wants to enjoy a happy and healthy Christmas ☺  
**Wishing you all a MERRY CHRISTMAS & A Happy New Year!** ~ Mr Heggarty

### 1. COVID

The table below shows the numbers of confirmed positive cases in NI schools last week. I am sharing this with parents to let you see what exactly schools have had to deal with since September/October.

Table 6 shows the number of pupils and staff cases, by school type, in the previous 28 days, up to Epidemiological Week 49 (12th December 2021).

Table 6. Number of pupil and staff cases, by school type, in the previous 28 days to 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2021				
School Type	Pupils	Staff	Total	Proportion of all cases that
Primary	6557	790	7347	89.2%
Post Primary	6037	573	6610	91.3%
Special	167	92	259	64.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12761</b>	<b>1455</b>	<b>14216</b>	<b>89.8%</b>

**Please remember NOW and for JANUARY ....**

- a) Parents should **not** send a child who is considered a close contact into school. (A close contact is someone who lives in the same house as someone who has tested positive and/or someone who is contacted directly by PHA)
  - b) If a child is a close contact, parents should arrange for a PCR test on day 2 of being off school (and another on day 8 if the day 2 test was negative & the child had returned to school following their day 2 negative result). Some parents may choose whole-household isolation if someone in their home tests positive. This is what used to happen before the summer. Like most other schools, we have found that quite a few children go on to test positive in between Day 2 and Day 8. This is why I have requested parents seriously consider keeping children off between Day 2 and Day 8 PCRs. This DE policy of children returning to school in between tests makes no sense and has proven to be disastrous: improving school attendance but spreading Covid around schools, which ultimately reduces school attendance in the long-term.
  - c) LFTs are not as reliable as PCRs – usually because it's difficult to get good samples from children and lateral flow tests are not as sensitive as the proper PCR.
  - d) If a parent doesn't keep their close contact child off school or refuses to get their close contact child tested, they must understand that they are increasing the risk of spreading Covid to other children and adults.
  - e) **BE COVID ALERT: new persistent cough // high temperature 37.7o<sup>c</sup> + // loss of smell or taste**
  - f) ***Please be patient with school!*** We are all fed up and exhausted dealing with Covid and its consequences – just like you parents! School staff are dealing with the same issues as our school families are: regularly taking children for tests, managing children isolating, children missing school, etc.
2. **Aldo the Magician** - Aldo the Magician will be in school on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December, putting on multiple magic shows for each class to enjoy. **If parents wish to make a £1 voluntary donation towards the cost of school doing this it would be appreciated**, as we have had limited opportunities to raise any significant amounts of school fund over 2021.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	P1-3 visit to Strand Cinema for Christmas movie
Tuesday 21 December	Christmas Magic Show for each class with <i>The Amazing Aldo</i> . If parents wish to make a £1 voluntary donation towards the cost of school doing this, it would be appreciated. However, school does <u>understand</u> many families are finding things 'tight' 😊
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December	Last day of first <u>full</u> term. ***Uniform free day*** 12noon finish (no dinners or lunches)
<b>Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> December- Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Christmas holidays (10 school days inclusive)</b>
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2022	New spring term begins

# Information for parents and carers



Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19. Please don't send your child to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- loss of or change to their sense of taste or smell

If your child does not have symptoms of COVID-19 but has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and they or members of your household do not need to self-isolate. Your child can attend school if fit to do so.

Contact tracing and self-isolation procedures have recently changed, so here's what to do in particular cases.

Contact tracing will be done by the Contact Tracing Service at the Public Health Agency (PHA). They will call from the number **028 9536 8888** – save the number in your phone so that you recognise it and please answer if they call.

## My child has COVID-19 symptoms

- Book your child a PCR test as soon as possible.
- They should isolate until they get their result. If it is negative they can carry on as normal and return to school as long as they are well (no fever for 48 hours).
- If it is positive they should isolate for 10 days. You will receive further information by text message and a contact tracing call from the PHA.
- You should advise your child's school or nursery that they have tested positive.

You can book a PCR test online via [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by calling 119 if you can't go online.

## Someone in our household is positive

- Everyone in the household should book a PCR test as soon as possible and again for the 8th day after their exposure. Anyone who tests positive should isolate for 10 days.
- Adults who are fully vaccinated do not have to isolate while they're waiting for the results. Adults who are not fully vaccinated should isolate for 10 days regardless of their test result.
- Children aged 5-17 who are not vaccinated should isolate until they get their results. If the result is negative they can come out of isolation and return to school.
- Children under the age of 5 are advised to take a PCR test but they do not have to isolate while waiting for results.



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### CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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If like us, you value **LEARNING, FAMILY & COMMUNITY** we are the right choice of school for you!

- ✓ Caring & inclusive
- ✓ Small school warmth
- ✓ Engaging curriculum
- ✓ High academic results
- ✓ Wrap-around pastoral care
- ✓ Technology-embracing
- ✓ Collaborative working with parents & community
- ✓ Multi-award-winning

Cregagh Primary School has served the East & South Belfast community since 1939.

Excellent standards of pastoral care, teaching and learning - along with our modern and bright school buildings - make us an ever-increasingly popular first choice primary school.

**FUTURE P1 PARENTS;** get in touch with your details and we will send a full pre-application info pack to your home!

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