St Mary’s Primary School

Principal: Mrs Oonagh McNally

B.Ed. D.A.S.E P.Q.H.

Telephone No: 028 406 50426

Email: omcnally563@c2kni.net

**www.stmaryspsdechomet.com**

6 Closkelt Road

Ballyward

CASTLEWELLAN

BT31 9QE

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

Dear Parents,

We are delighted to be welcoming back our pupils after what has been the most challenging time in a generation for children, parents and school staff.

The Department of Education has published the New School Day Guidance for all schools in Northern Ireland and I have attached just what our school day will look like. We realise there is quite a large amount of information to digest but we will all become used to how the school day looks after a week or two. Please also refer to Mr Weir’s letter in this guidance.

The safety of the pupils, staff and parents and extended family is most important and is the reason for the many new procedures we have put in place. In order for this be successful, we need to very much work in partnership with one another and strictly adhere to the guidance set out below. We are doing everything we can to ensure the safety of all associated with the school.

This may seem somewhat overwhelming at the moment. We want to be here to assist you in any way we can. Mrs McNally can be contacted via email at any time and will be available to answer calls from 10am-2pm on Thursday 20th and Friday 21st August. The teachers are contactable via email at all times and they will check these daily. Mrs McNally will be able to answer calls from 8.15am until 8.35am every morning and staff will also take calls after 3.15pm each afternoon. Mrs Doyle will be in the school office from 9.30am every Wednesday and Friday to also answer any queries and at any other time please feel free to leave a message on the answer machine which will be monitored daily. We are always here to answer any queries you may have and we want to reassure you that you are welcome to email or call and we will be happy to talk to you. You may also make an appointment to come in and talk to any staff member by calling or emailing the school first.

Staff emails:

Mrs McNally: omcnally563@c2kni.net

Mrs McEvoy: mmcevoy710@c2kni.net

Mrs O’Callaghan: focallaghan412@c2kni.net

Miss Stewart: lstewart764@c2kni.net

Mrs Fegan: pfegan609@c2kni.net

We are very much looking forward to seeing our pupils on Monday 24th August for the whole week. The children will be off on Monday 31st August as this is a bank holiday but they will return on Tuesday 1st September.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Oonagh McNally

Principal

School Restart August 2020

The Executive, on 6th August, agreed that the stringent application of social distancing requirements between pupils will be relaxed from 17th August. Protective bubbles will be used as a key mitigating action where possible. The protective bubble arrangements will be used to segment pupils into consistent group or groups as far as is possible. It is envisaged that in most cases a class will act as a single consistent bubble with minimal prolonged interaction with other classes. Where a child is medically advised not to attend school from the commencement of the 2020/21 term, parents should consult with their school Principal and, as required, the Education Authority regarding education provision for these pupils. Strict social distancing will remain in place between all adults in the school and should be encouraged between pupils but only as far as it practicable.

St. Mary’s Primary School, Dechomet: New School Day

1. Signage has been ordered for various places around the school from Kaizen Print who is an EA approved supplier. This will help remind the children for the need to socially distance when going to the toilet or entering and leaving the school.
2. An electronic vaporiser has been purchased along with appropriate disinfectant. This will be used daily in all areas after thorough cleaning by the building supervisor and will allow for thorough daily cleaning of all areas.
3. Increased hygiene measures: Sanitizer will be at all entrances and will be used by all staff and pupils upon entering and leaving the building. Sanitizer will be available in all classrooms along with soap and paper towels and children will wash their hands upon entering the classroom each day and regularly throughout the day. Soap will be available in all toilets. Sanitizer, soap and paper towels will be checked daily by building supervisor and replenished. The most important of our daily routine will be the regular cleaning of hands using soap and water. Please remind your children how to do this properly for 20 seconds each time. We will continue to use the theme of ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ and remind children that coughing or sneezing is to be done using a tissue or into the crook of their elbow. Children will be discouraged from touching their eyes, face, nose and mouth.
4. Staggered arrivals and home times. This will be done by surname so parents can drop off all of their children at one time in the mornings. Home times will be staggered by class times with the exclusion of children using school transport. Please remind these children to enter the school via their allocated doors in the morning and to socially distance at all times after leaving the bus.

ARRIVAL TIMES: Please drop of and collect children quickly and children MUST enter and leave by door allocated to their class.

8.45-8.55 Surnames: Andrews, Austin, Bannon, Brannigan, Burns, Carson, Carville, Cosgrove, Cunningham, Doyle, Duggan and Fitzpatrick.

8.55-9.05 Surnames: Flanagan, Goodall, Haughey, Horsfall, Kavanagh-McEvoy, Kearney, King, Leyden Hughes, Malone, McAnulty, McArdle, McCartan, McCracken, McElroy, McEvoy and McGurk.

9.05-9.10 Surnames: Monaghan, Morgan, Murphy, O’Donnell, O’Rourke, O’Shea, Ownes, Paine, Quail, Rice, Rooney, Savage, Scanlon, Sheppard, Shields, Smyth and Starrs.

HOME TIME: Reception/P1 will leave at 1.50pm from their allocated door at the school office.

P2/3 will leave at 2pm. P3 stay until 3.10pm (3 days per week: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday) They will leave from the library door.

P4/5 will leave at 3pm and P6/7 will leave at 3.10pm. If you have children in both classes, can you wait inside your car for Year 6/7 to come out at 3.10pm. Bus children will remain in their room and their class teacher will walk them to bus. If there are bus pupils in 2-3 club, Miss Stewart will collect them wearing a mask and bring them to the bus. **Each class must enter and leave at nominated door at ALL times:**

P6/7 will enter and leave by their annex door

 P4/5 will enter/leave by front cloakroom door

 P 2/3 will enter/leave by library door

 Reception/P1 will enter/leave by office door.

1. Break Times: there will be staggered break times: Reception, P1-3 will have break from 10.30-10.45. The playground will be divided in two using cones, one class on one side, the other class on the opposite side. P4-P7 will have break from 10.50-11.05 using both sides of the yard. The pitch may be used when dry and also divided in two. Supervising teacher will stay with their class with the classroom assistant from the other class staying with them and so not breaking bubbles.
2. Lunchtime : Lunches and dinners will be eaten in classrooms or outside if weather permits. Each classroom assistant will collect the dinners from the dinner hall and bring them to their classroom wearing a mask which will be removed when they return to their class. The assistants will return the dishes to the hall when dinner is finished. Reception-P3 will play outside 12-12.30 supervised separately by their assistants while their teachers have their lunch. They will return to class 12 30-1pm to eat their lunch and dinner supervised by their teachers and assistants. Year4-7 will stay in class 12 30-1pm to eat their lunch and dinner supervised by their teachers and Mrs Wilson (Mrs McCrickard will have her lunch) and they will go outside for play at 1pm supervised by their own assistant while the teachers have their lunch. **We do not have confirmation if school dinners will be available the week starting 24th August but we will keep you informed when information is given to us.** The children will only have one option for school dinners and we encourage you to avail of this service in school.

 7. Classroom assistants Reception/P1 Shirley 10.30-1.30pm P2/3 Geraldine 9-11.30 Leona 9.30-1pm P4/5 Valerie 9.30-1.30pm P6/7 Monica 9.30-2.30

8. Toilets: Reception-P3 use toilets at their end of school. P4-P7 use toilets outside their classroom. Encourage children to use toilets at allocated times unless there is an 'emergency '. This will be difficult to implement in the younger classes. Only 1 child is to be in the toilet at a time due to social distancing.

9. Classroom assistants working with children outside their class: Shirley to use library area. Leona/Geraldine to use resource room. Valerie to use p4/5 cloakroom. P6/7 to use their annex. PPE to be worn: mask/visor at assistant’s discretion.

10. Homework : Homework will not be given as normal. This is due to the risk of cross contamination between home and school. We are currently working on the best way to organise this and will keep you fully informed. The first week back to school will be a period of settling in for the children and getting used to the new procedures. We will be ensuring that each child feels happy to be back in school. We anticipate homework to be starting after this. Year 4-7 will be given digital homework once per week. This will help to prepare the children for this type of homework in the event of local or wider school closures in the future or if a class or group of pupils need to self isolate.

11. Outside agencies eg speech therapist, peri support, Education psychology, may work with children if socially distancing by 2m and wearing a mask and/or visor. They may not share resources with the child they are working with. Spanish: this may will continue however the teacher must remain at the whiteboard and socially distancing by 2m from the children at all times. No resources may be given out and she must wear a mask at all times which will be changed to a new mask in between each change of class.. At the minute no music tuition is happening. There also will be no outside agencies coming eg Evos soccer, Burns dancing.

12. Breakfast Club/2-3 club/Afterschool Club Sanitizer will be available in both. To avoid breaking class bubbles both of these will happen in the large assembly hall. The children will be ONLY sitting as class groups, socially distancing from the other class groups. The assembly hall is the only area in the school large enough to accommodate this. The assistants who are involved MUST WEAR FULL PPE: mask and/or visor and apron and will attempt to be 2m from children although this may not always be possible. In breakfast club the children will walk in their class group to the hatch to be served, staying 1m apart when in the queue. They will return to their class table and remain there until each class group is asked to walk to their class using their own entrance NOT through the school. They will sanitize their hands again upon entering the main school building. 2-3 Club and Afterschool Club: Again the supervisor must wear full PPE: Mask and/or visors and apron. They will place children in class groups and the children will not be allowed to mix. Children may play with allocated games (which will then be quarantined for 3 days before being used again) or watch a dvd or other activity. The children will not be writing or colouring in as resources may not be shared within the school and all class resources will stay in the class. Food will not be provided at the afterschool club however pupils may bring a small snack. In both clubs, children will be reminded to sanitize and wash hands properly. At breakfast club the children in reception-P3 will have a toilet allocated. P4-7 will wait until they go into the main building when breakfast club is over so please ensure your child uses the toilet before coming to school. The toilets will be cleaned between the 2-3 Club and the After School Club however there are not enough toilets to facilitate one per class. Sanitizing spray will provided for the children to spray on the door handles before entering and leaving the toilets and correct hand washing will be encouraged at all times.

13. To facilitate new Reception/P1 children on the first day back 24th August, Shirley will come in for 8.40am and supervise the children in the class. This will allow Miss Stewart to meet and greet the new parents and pupils outside and she can then bring the children down to the class. No parents are allowed inside the school building without express permission from the principal and without a prior appointment.

14. As pupils arrive and leave school daily, we need to avoid congestion of any kind in the playground and social distancing guidelines are to be followed at all times. We ask parents for a fast drop off and collection and to maintain fully social distancing from one another. Conversations are not to take place in the playground due to staggered drop off and collection and to prevent congestion.

15. Children are not allowed to bring a bag to school but this will be under constant review. Lunch and a snack may be brought in a disposable bag, ( preferably a brown paper lunch bag which is better for the environment however any disposable bag will suffice) and water bottle. Parents are to provide pencils, glue stick, colouring pencils, a ruler, rubber, a pair of child's scissors, 6 small packets of tissues, small hand sanitizer, packet of antibacterial wipes and a sharpener which will be kept in a tray labelled with child's name and these resources will not be shared.

16. Staff may move into another room but must stay 2m away from children and must use a mask/visor. EG Miss Stewart will help with reading in Mrs McEvoy's room or release Mrs O'Callaghan.

17. Uniform. Full school uniform plus PE kit of navy tracksuit bottoms and white polo shirt. Children will be asked to wear these on alternate days starting on Monday 24th August with full uniform, Tuesday 25th wear PE kit and so on. The child’s full name and class MUST BE CLEARLY LABELLED on all items. Coats will be stored: Reception/P1 in library cloakroom P2/3 cloakroom leading to assembly hall P4/5 normal cloakroom P6/7 in their annex .

18. Parents must make it known to the school, any underlying health conditions their child may have. All inhalers must be in date and clearly labelled with the child's name and class. It is the responsibility of the parent to replace inhalers and know when the date is up. If a child feels unwell please keep them at home or if a staff member believes a child is sick the child is to be collected. Parents must ensure the school has all current phone numbers.

19. CCMS and the Education Authority has requested that all parents are to download the contact tracing app on their mobile phones and are responsible for informing the school if they have been in contact with COVID-19 or if they or a family member has contacted COVID-19. A sheet explaining the importance of this app has been included. The Department of Health’s TEST, TRACE and PROTECT strategy requires early identification and isolation of such cases, rapid testing, tracing of close contacts and early, effective and supported isolation to break transmission chains.

20. As parents are not allowed in the school building, staff may be contacted via email which will be checked daily or the principal may be contacted by phone from 8.15am- 8.35am. Parents may make an appointment to come in if there are exceptional circumstances and only with prior agreement from the school principal.

21. Due to the nature of the school building children from Reception-P3 will not be allowed past the central door during the school day apart from entering and leaving first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening. P4-P7 will also not be allowed past the middle door at any time during the school day. As children walk outside of their classroom at any stage to go to the toilet, they will walk to the toilet on the same side of the corridor as the toilet and will walk back on the same side as the classroom.

22. School Transport: The Executive has agreed that there is no longer a requirement for stringent social distancing on dedicated home to school transport vehicles. **It is strongly recommended that all pupils wear a face covering on all dedicated school transport including buses and taxis including primary school pupils.** Parents should ensure their child has access to and understands the importance of wearing a face covering. As yet, we do not think there will be school transport available on the week starting 24th August so you must organise your own way to school that week. School transport will start on Tuesday 1st September. **The Education Authority is working collaboratively with transport providers to maximise capacity across the home to school transport network. Home to school transport, either on public bus services or on dedicated transport services, should only be used by parents where there is no alternative available.**

23. PPE: Children should not wear PPE in school unless there is a medical reason for it. Staff should wear PPE in line with current health and safety policies and risk assessments. Face covering must be worn in the staff room and during adult to adult meetings including meetings with parents lasting more than 15 minutes. Face coverings are strongly encouraged for staff during activities that entail large numbers of staff or pupils within an enclosed space where social distancing is not possible. Please explain to your children that some staff may be wearing masks and/or visors in order to prepare them.

24. Curriculum delivery: In reception and primary classes, it is envisaged that in most cases a class will act as a single bubble with minimal prolonged interaction with other classes within the school. This should allow for a fuller delivery of the Northern Ireland curriculum. The delivery of PE is an area schools have particular concerns however a broad and well balanced PE programme will support the development of our children. Due to the assembly hall being used for both Breakfast club and after school clubs we are currently looking at ways to use outside for the delivery of PE, weather permitting. This will be reviewed regularly.

25. Covid-19 Symptoms Onsite: All members of our school including staff and pupils will be continually supported to understand the symptoms to look for. If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature/fever or a loss or a change in their normal sense of smell/taste in school, they and any members of their household within our school must be sent home immediately and advised to follow the PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. A full record of this will be kept in school. A child awaiting collection will be moved to the resource room with the door closed and a window will be opened for ventilation. Appropriate adult supervision will be provided wearing PPE. If a child is seriously ill or injured an ambulance will be called. The room will be cleaned appropriately when the child leaves. Pupils and staff who exhibit any symptoms associated with COVID\_19 should not attend school. The N.I. Executive has rolled out a Test and Trace and Protect strategy designed to control the spread of COVID\_19 and symptomatic staff are expected to follow the advice and obtain a test for COVID\_19. Where an individual has had a negative result, it is important to still apply caution. The child or staff member can return to school providing they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours. Anyone who tests positive will be contacted by the Contact Tracing Service and will need to share information about their recent interactions. Potentially an entire class bubble may be instructed to self- isolate at home.

26. **All money to be paid to school will only be accepted through our school app** as we do not want to be handling money this year. Most parents already pay this way but for the few who as yet do not or any new parents, Mrs Doyle will be available in the office next Friday 21st August from 9.30am and she can assist via a phone call, anyone having difficulty in setting up this app on your phone, tablet or computer.

All of the above is subject to change and will be monitored at all times.