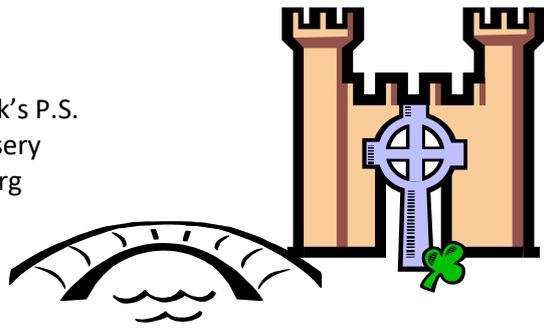


St Patrick's P.S.  
and Nursery  
Castledearg



73 Castlefin Rd  
Castledearg  
Co Tyrone BT81 7EE

Tel 028816 71458 Fax 028816 79821 email: [info@stpatricks.castledearg.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stpatricks.castledearg.ni.sch.uk)

Website – [www.stpatrickspscastledearg.co.uk](http://www.stpatrickspscastledearg.co.uk)

25/03/21

Dear Parent/s,

I am writing to you now that all the pupils have returned to school from Nursery through to P7. The majority of the children have settled really well back into class and hopefully we can look forward to an uninterrupted Summer term after the Easter Holidays. This will depend on how well we locally adhere to all the rules and guidelines that remain in place to keep all of us safe.

I know a lot of the pupils and families have found the second lockdown particularly challenging and I wish to thank all those who tried their best with remote learning during this period. At the end of the day as parent/s all you can do is make sure the children are safe and secure during these unprecedented times.

My thanks also to the staff who opened daily for children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils in Nursery and Primary School from January to March. Thanks also to the teachers who kept planning, setting work and marking via Google Classroom and supporting families and pupils during the second wave of Covid – 19. It is widely accepted now that teachers need the children in front of them to really help and progress their learning.

As the safety of the pupils is my main priority, all the normal Covid – 19 safety rules remain in place until the end of the school year. Crucially if any pupil or family member develops any symptoms seek appropriate medical advice. Do not send unwell pupils into school as this could mean that whole classes lose out on learning for up to 10 ten days.

I will try to give pupils a more normal school experience gradually but I am bound by the rules that remain in place by the Department. Teachers must also adhere to the guidance and I know there is much comment about schools on the news and social media but we always strive to do what is best for our pupils in St. Patrick's.

I also share your disappointment about the postponement of First Holy Communion until September and the decision to review proposed Confirmation dates within the Diocese in May. It serves as a timely reminder that we still are in a pandemic and that a cautious approach needs to be taken around family gatherings.

The school website has been refreshed and updated and I will continue to post announcements and all the information required for parents here. As communicated this week as many of the pupils have only just returned we will re-schedule Parent Teacher Meetings until later in the Summer term and tomorrow Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 is a normal school day.

I have asked the teachers to set reading and spelling homework only in the summer term via Google Classroom and the emphasis in class will be on face to face teaching and re-establishing relationships and the pupils' confidence since the most recent lockdown. The pupils in P4 to P7 will still have access to Mathletics and Accelerated Reader and IXL after the Easter break if parent/s wish their children to continue with homework.

I still have no detailed information regarding entrance exams for the local Grammar schools for next year. There is some discussion about a new style of test or whether an exam will be required next year for admission. So in the meantime we will have to be patient and continue with the normal teaching of Maths and English within the classroom until I receive more detail from the Grammar Schools.

**Be extremely careful when dropping off and collecting pupils to and from school. I have noticed parents double parking, parking in bus bays and blocking pavements and obscuring entrances. The pupils are having to get off the buses in the middle of the road and children walking are also having to walk onto the road. This is not safe for our pupils so please exercise extreme care at these times. Also keep the coned area and keep clear boxes clear of traffic as this is to give myself and staff a clear line of sight when the children are entering and exiting school. Also pupils should not cross the road themselves unless at one of the school crossing patrol points. Always remember pupil safety.**

The Department of Education has asked me to remind parents not to congregate at the school gates and to observe social distancing at all times.

If you have any concerns about your child's return to school or other concerns you can contact myself, Mrs. Mc Glade or Mrs. Shelley in the Nursery by telephone or by email.

Nursery closes on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 for the Easter Holidays. The school will close as planned on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 12pm and there will be a meal served on the day. The school will reopen on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 as normal. I hope then that everyone has a great Easter break free from the stress of home-schooling and we can look forward to a positive Summer term.

Many thanks

Mr. Mc Gurk Principal