

**ST. PATRICK’S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**12 Ballymacbredan Road, Magheralin, Craigavon. BT67 OQU**

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**Principal: Mrs. M. McGrath. BA(QTS), PQHSH, DipPD.**

**‘Together we learn, together we grow, developing our future, wherever we go!’**

5th January 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope that you and your families have had an enjoyable, peaceful Christmas and New Year break.

We are delighted that school will reopen, as planned, on Thursday 6th January 2022.

As we approach the new term, I know that many of you will be concerned about the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially with the very high and very transmissible Omicron variant. You may already be aware the Department of Health has revised its guidance on self-isolation for **close contacts**. You will find the details at the bottom of this letter relating to close contacts and school aged children.

To allow us all to remain at school for as many days as is possible, we ask all parents to **ensure that your child is kept off school should they show any of the following symptoms;**

- a high temperature, or;

- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than one hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough this could be worse than usual), or;

-Anosmia – the loss or change in your normal sense of smell (it can affect your sense of taste).

Should your child show any of these symptoms in school, you will be asked to collect your child and arrange for testing to take place.

There continues to be unprecedented pressures on both teaching and non-teaching staff within schools across the entire education system in Northern Ireland. This has led to a significant shortage of available substitute teachers across all sectors and many schools are finding that securing substitute teachers for their classes has become impossible.

We will of course, do all we can to ensure that our classes remain open, however, in the event of unsafe staffing levels, we will have no alternative but to temporarily close a class or classes.

This measure will be a last resort and we hope that this will not happen, but with the current situation in schools, we must be prepared. Therefore, we ask that you ensure that your childcare arrangements are in place should a class or classes be required to close **at short notice.**

In the event that we need you to keep your child at home, you will be notified by the school texting service.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of our school community, and to wish you and your family a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs M McGrath**

**Principal**

***“School aged children (including children of primary school age) and young people who are not fully vaccinated***

***You are advised to isolate and take a lateral flow device (LFD) test as soon as possible.***

***If this is negative you can stop isolating but should continue to take daily lateral flow tests until the tenth day after the last date of contact with the positive case.***

***The lateral flow should ideally be taken before you leave the house for the first time each day.***

***If any lateral flow test is positive you should isolate immediately and book a PCR test.***

***If at any time- you develop symptoms, you should isolate immediately and book a PCR even if the lateral flow test is negative.”***