



12 Courtenay Hill, Newry, Co Down, BT34 2EA

Phone: (028) 3026 2175

22 June 2020

Dear Parents

I begin this letter by stating clearly that I hope PHA guidance will relax sufficiently over the summer to enable us to have all pupils back to school full time in September. However, the advice at the moment will not allow that within our school building.

We are happy that social distancing has been reduced to 1 metre. We have arranged furniture accordingly in each classroom and if we move all storage units etc into corridors, the maximum number that we can fit into a room falls far short of a full class. Although the Minister of Education had hoped that the 1 metre distancing would have allowed all pupils to return full time, this is evidently not the case.

Therefore, we are sharing a plan with you **that we hope may not need to happen**, but one that we feel we need to move on 'just in case' so that you as families will know where you stand if the guidance remains unchanged when we re-open.

Should the 1 metre distancing be in place at that time, we will have to operate the 'Blended Learning' that the Minister has referenced on many occasions. This will consist of pupils attending school for two full days each week and will access learning from home three days per week.

The school based days will operate as follows:

<u><b>Blue Group</b></u> Monday and Tuesday – All Day	<u><b>White Group</b></u> Thursday and Friday – All Day
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In these very difficult times, we recognise that this is not ideal and, therefore, we wish to accommodate parents as far as possible. As such if any parent has a work related/other **need** (not a preference) for either Blue or White group option, please notify school **by email only** at [bdowney378@c2kni.net](mailto:bdowney378@c2kni.net) by tonight giving name of children(ren) and current class, as we will start to compile these lists at 8.00 am tomorrow morning.

Additionally, we are working on a plan to provide a four-day school based placement for any families who absolutely need this due to work or pastoral reasons. We will use the Assembly Hall and Canteen for this and I believe that we could accommodate 80 children. If you feel that you absolutely require this, please make the request by email to [bdowney378@c2kni.net](mailto:bdowney378@c2kni.net) by tonight explaining your circumstances. On the child's additional 2 days, they will receive supervision and will work on the 'Learning from Home' work that is released to all pupils. If oversubscribed with requests, we will ask parents for documentary evidence to help us in making what will be a very difficult request. I, therefore, hope that only parents who cannot manage with two days in school and three days at home will ask to be considered.

We will advise you before 30 June 2020 of your child's placing and please note that we will ensure that all children from a family will attend on the same days.

Once more, believe me that it remains my sincere hope that we can have all pupils back full time. If that happens, I will inform parents as soon as possible. However, within the current guidelines, we do need to make a plan based on the number of pupils the school can safely accommodate with the 1 metre distancing guidance. This is **Phase 1 of the plan, consulting with you**. The **next stage will be school organising your requests** and the final will be **notifying you of arrangements for your child**. Whilst I would usually be frustrated if a complex piece of work like this became unnecessary upon completion, I am hoping sincerely that that will be the case in this instance.

Please be assured that the school is continually working behind the scenes to ensure that the return of your children into the school building is a safe and happy experience for them.

Yours faithfully

*Mrs Monaghan*

**ST CLARE'S ABBEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**