



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

Phone: (028) 3026 2175

20 November 2020

Dear parents,

A.

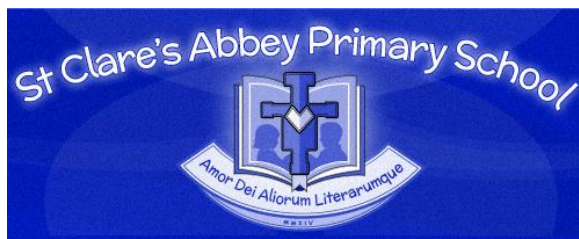
We have had our first instance of sending a class home due to a positive test outcome for a member of a P2 class bubble. We have engaged with PHA throughout the morning to establish 'close contact' tracing and all who need to isolate have been identified and have been informed. The experience has shown that the systems work most effectively and we move forward with renewed confidence. I thank the parents involved for responding so well to our correspondence. In light of this can I remind all parents to notify school immediately on 02830262175 if their child tests positive during the school day or via email to myself on [mmonaghan771@c2kni.net](mailto:mmonaghan771@c2kni.net) if notification is received in the evening, early morning or at weekends. Please **do not** inform me through Seesaw private message as I cannot guarantee that I will see these messages in time.

B

I knew that today was going to be a busy day, even without the positive Covid case. This was because we took the carefully considered decision to send children's assessment outcomes home yesterday and I anticipated a lot of parents contacting school in relation to these. I thought long and hard about whether we should do this but felt that it was too important not to. I do however want parents to think about what I am writing now:

1. It was inevitable that we would see reduced scores- the pupils were absent from school for 4 months.
2. Our scenario is typical of all schools.
3. There is no quick fix to academic recovery.

We have scrutinised the data and can see the gaps and have a clear way forward. That **cannot involve placing unrealistic workloads on our children**. They are where they are developmentally and are only capable of so much. We cannot 'hot house' them and expect them to catch up immediately. Your children are in the best of hands and whilst the recommendation that we have suggested to you for homework may not seem huge, we are great believers in the power of slow and steady steps. We all need to remember that we are managing academic catch up with social and emotional 'catch up.' We must nurture our



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children to get the very best out of them. I guarantee that **any parent who follows our recommendations to the letter** will be serving their child very, very well.

4. Our teachers have completely changed their class planners from previous years to allow more time for the core subjects, careful steps are being taken in class to make the most of every available teaching moment. This is difficult as we see real value in many of the things that we have had to put to the side at the moment, but we are prioritising.
5. Therefore, I ask you to **please, please trust in us** and **work with us**. We really do have a clear plan and there is no way of short circuiting the 'catch up' time. If you do your bit, we do ours and the children do theirs our pupils will thrive. They are showing great signs of doing so already, we just need to keep our focus.
6. If, having read this you still have unanswered questions, email me [mmonaghan771@c2kni.net](mailto:mmonaghan771@c2kni.net) and I will get back to you. If you do not hear from me, please resend.

C.

In the recently completed parental questionnaire several parents stated that their child would benefit from an 'out of hours booster programme'. A letter will be sent out on Seesaw private messaging on Monday, describing how this will operate (P4-P7 pupils), please look out for it and respond. If you are not able to avail, please indicate your reason in the section provided, in case there is a difficulty with which we can help.

D.

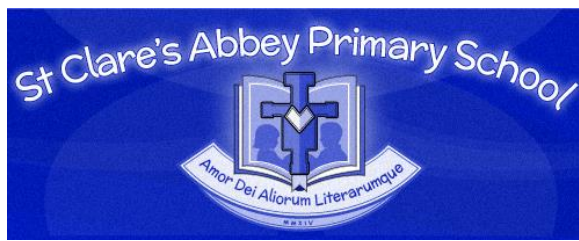
Canon Francis Brown has released the sacramental dates, although times are not available, as they will be dependent on social distancing requirements for churches, closer to the time. It is wonderful to receive the dates so early and I thank Canon for that:

Confirmation- Friday evening 23<sup>rd</sup> April

First Holy Communion- Saturday Morning - 22<sup>nd</sup> May

E.

Thank you to all for all the extra water consumption this week. We are delighted. Your children have really come 'on board' with the need to 'keep their brain watered, like a plant!' Some of our younger children who had forgotten to ask for water only at home, agreed to pour out their juice in class and replace it with water- some didn't want that of course and their wishes were



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respected, but we will continue in our pursuit for good levels of hydration. Every little helps!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

F.

Finally, another thanks to the many parents who were in contact to offer supplies for our outdoor learning area. Mrs Keenan is in the process of corresponding with each. We are very appreciative.

Have a lovely weekend and thank you for your support,

Yours in partnership,

Mrs Monaghan