

BALLYORAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Principal | Mr R Woolsey, BEd (Hons), PQH



1st January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Reopening of School after Christmas Holidays

I hope you and your family have had a safe and enjoyable Christmas break and I would like to wish you a happy new year. You will be aware from media reports in recent days about changes around the return to school as a result of the ongoing pandemic. I wanted to wait until I had received official confirmation from the Department of Education (DE) and further information from the Education Authority before I wrote to you, to ensure that I was providing you with all the information that you need in one communication. The timing of these decisions and the manner of their announcement by the Department of Education have been disappointing, leaving both schools and parents with little time to make contingency arrangements for next week.

Please note the following as a result of the new DE guidance to schools:

1. Nursery will reopen for all pupils as planned on **Tuesday 5th January 2021**. Normal staggered arrival and pick up times will be in operation and school dinners will be available as usual.
2. The return of Year 1 – 7 pupils has been delayed by one week and pupils will move to online home learning and not return to face to face learning in school until **Monday 11th January 2021**.
3. DE have stated that schools should use the first planned day back (Tuesday 5th January) for preparation and planning for online learning and for putting in place arrangements for Vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers.
4. School will be open for Vulnerable pupils and the children of Key Workers from **Wednesday 6th January 2021**.
5. Online Home Learning will be available from **Wednesday 6th January 2021**. See Guidance at [Microsoft Word - Parental Guidance on Home Learning \(primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com\)](#) Translated versions available at [Translated Letters | Ballyoran Primary School \(secure-primarysite.net\)](#)
6. Key Worker Registration - Any Key Worker parents who wish for their child/children to attend school next week must register using the following link **by 12noon on Monday 4th January**. Please read information on next page first. https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-yeCOETeDkaBkAVAK4mNqPJLf2rqWHBGkOFzAn_sWC1UMzdST1gwVVNPM0FHQIE4TTdUTFE2ODEyMy4u
7. Vulnerable Pupil Registration - Any parent whose child falls into the 'Vulnerable Pupil' category and wishes for them to attend school next week must register using the following link **by 12noon on Monday 4th January**. Please read information on next page first. https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-yeCOETeDkaBkAVAK4mNqPJLf2rqWHBGkOFzAn_sWC1UNIVKUTBPMEExRRUpLOUVBNFdRQ1QzSU45NS4u

It is my hope that school will reopen for all pupils on Monday 11th January. I do however understand that given the increasing levels of transmission of the virus, that there is much anxiety among parents but I wish to again reassure you that the health and safety of pupils and staff continues to be my number one priority. We have robust mitigation measures in place to keep your children safe and staff will continue to work hard to do this.

Yours faithfully

Richard Woolsey
Principal

Children of Key Workers

School will be open from **Wednesday 6th January** for children of key worker parents. The Department of Education have stated that children of key workers will be in school for 'supervised 'learning', doing the same activities as the children who are at home. School times will be as follows:

9am – 2pm: Yrs 1 – 2

9am – 3pm: Yrs 3 – 7

- School uniform should be worn.
- There will be no staggered start or finish times.
- Breakfast Club will be available from 8.15am as usual.
- A healthy Breaktime snack should be brought as usual.
- Lunch arrangements as normal - school meals will be available.

Key worker categories are defined as:

- Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector;
- Education and childcare. This includes pre-school and teaching staff, social workers, youth workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response;
- Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles;
- Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response;
- Utilities, and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, banking and waste disposal;
- Financial Services - This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure);
- Food and other necessary goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g. hygiene, medical, etc.);
- Retail. This includes those workers who have been working throughout the pandemic in food retail, for example, and will now extend to those working in other retail businesses permitted to operate by the Executive from June 2020;
- Other workers essential to delivering key public services such as the National Crime Agency; and
- Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response

Vulnerable Pupils

School will be open for Vulnerable Pupils from **Wednesday 6th January**. The Department of Education have stated that Vulnerable Pupils will be in school for 'supervised 'learning', doing the same activities as the children who are at home. School times will be as follows:

9am – 2pm: Yrs 1 – 2

9am – 3pm: Yrs 3 – 7

- School uniform should be worn.
- There will be no staggered start or finish times.
- A healthy Breaktime snack should be brought as usual.
- Lunch arrangements as normal - school meals will be available.

Vulnerable Children are defined as:

- A child who has an assigned social worker because he or she is a child in need, in need of protection (or on the child protection register) or is a looked after child.
- A child in need includes young carers, children with disabilities, and children living in families where there is domestic abuse, substance abuse, and / or mental health difficulties.
- A child who is receiving support from, or has been referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
- A child who has a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN), a child who is accessing EOTAS, or a child who normally accesses Education Nurture Units.

- A child who is 'on-the-edge' of receiving support from children's social services.
- A child who is in need, including in need of protection, but whose need is not known to statutory services.
- A child who is not known to statutory or voluntary and community support services but who is vulnerable because their family is under increased pressure due to Covid19 related circumstances.
- A young person who was previously a looked after child, whether or not they are receiving support from statutory services.
- A child who has been placed for adoption.
- Asylum seeking and refugee children and children whose parents have no recourse to public funds.