

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY UNIT  
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**20<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Dear Parents/ Guardians**

***Supporting Vulnerable Children and Children of Key Workers in Primary School***

The Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA, made a statement on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March outlining how schools will close from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, in response to the developing Coronavirus (COVID-19). As part of the national response to this situation schools have been requested to provide care for vulnerable children and children of key workers. Please note that this is a markedly different type of provision than what is normally provided in schools. St Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit will primarily be providing a child care service for a limited number of pupils. Formal teaching will not occur as not all teachers are currently available to teach specific year groups and teachers must also be available to provide online/remote learning for pupils not in attendance.

It is important for overall clarity for parents/guardians and for the school that we know how many children will be attending each day.

With this in mind, if you are an identified key worker, please make contact with school by 6.00pm on Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, to inform us if your child will be attending school on Monday. This should be by e-mail to [info@stmarysps.cushendall.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stmarysps.cushendall.ni.sch.uk)

Before contacting school, please pay particular attention to the following points.

- A list of key workers, issued by the Department of Education is listed overleaf.
- If only 1 parent is a key worker the other parent would be expected to look after the child so as to reduce the number of pupils attending school.
- In single parent families, the individual parent MUST be a key worker.
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family members, friends etc. Please try and use schools as a last resort. This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance.
- Normal opening and closing time will apply.
- Children attending will be required to wear their school uniform and to bring a packed lunch.

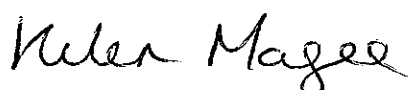
**If any pupils or family members are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 they should not use this service. You should contact the Public Health Agency (Telephone 111) and follow their advice. If you work part-time, you should only use this service for the hours that you are working.**

**Principal:** Mrs Helen Magee  
BA (QTS) Hons, PQH (NI)

We would ask that you pay attention to the points outlined above before deciding to send your child to school. Obviously, it goes without saying, if your only option is to send your child to school, we will look after them in order to support you in your important role.

Finally, I would just like to thank those of you who have been incredibly supportive of our school in the past few days and weeks in what have been very testing times for us all. Your patience and understanding is very much appreciated. These are unprecedented times and I know how worrying this situation is and how hard these next months may be for families. I hope that together, as a school community, we will continue to support one another and make the best of the situation that we are faced with. During this period of closure, if you need help or support, please do get in touch via [info@stmarysps.cushendun.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stmarysps.cushendun.ni.sch.uk) and we will do all we can to help you.

Yours sincerely



*Mrs Helen Magee*  
*Principal*

**LIST OF KEY WORKERS AS OUTLINED ON  
DOCUMENTATION ISSUED TO SCHOOLS ON 19TH MARCH 2020.**

Please work with us to ensure that schools operate with a limited number of children and staff.

- 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 nursery and teaching staff, social 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, services and waste disposal
- 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)
- Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.