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Dear Primary 1 – Primary 7 Parent/Guardian

The Department of Education issued a document to all Schools on the 13th August 2020 entitled **“New School Day”**. This wording suggests both a new *unusual type* of School Day is ahead of us all, while also offering hope that we are finally returning to a new *fresh start* type of School Day allowing us once again to be the much loved learning community that is Harding Memorial Primary School. We have missed you and your children all so much during the lockdown period. We are excited to be coming back together as a School Family, whilst recognising that, to keep as many of us as safe as possible, we as a community still need to do important tasks, in our daily routine, a little more carefully and considerately to how we may have operated before “lockdown”

During September 2020 all our children will be together with their classmates and due to classroom sizes will most likely have minimal social distancing between children in the majority of normal everyday learning interactions. We have endeavoured throughout the summer period to put in place: thorough cleaning schedules, good hygiene routines and when we return we will keep our **Class and Key Stage Groupings**, or *Protective Bubbles* apart as much as possible for the integrity of the restrictions and the good of our whole community. However despite all the Infection Control Mitigation Measures that will be in place during the restart of School, it should be formally acknowledged we cannot give cast iron guarantees that we will be able to prevent any of our School Pupils and School Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff from being impacted by the Covid 19 Virus.

Children will be encouraged to maintain two metre social distancing from our School Staff, unless they are told by the supervising adult that it’s ok to be closer, for at least a short period of time. School Staff may be wearing PPE depending on their activity and what needs to happen for a short period of time. We hope for life and learning to be as **“normal as possible”** in school while acknowledging that in order to give as many of our community as safe a return as possible, we all will need to exercise caution to prevent our various class groupings experiencing Remote Learning for even the shortest period of time, as part of any protective quarantine measure.

This information will be updated if we find operation procedures need to change as we are all learning how to operate through our **“New School Day”** together. As Harding Memorial Primary School Principal I will continue to prioritise communication with all School Stakeholders (Parent/Guardians & Staff) if I believe that there are any changes in our circumstances that will potentially impact on your individual child’s protective bubble or staff wellbeing. Equally I hope and trust that you our Parent/Guardians will feel that you too can communicate considerately and confidentially with us, in a timely manner for the good of all the children in our care.

During the Emergency Lockdown, we as a school faced new challenges with Home Schooling/Remote Learning. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank every member of our school community for their support during that most unusual of times. Hopefully, school will now remain open on a Five day A Week/Full Time basis for as long as possible. That is why it is extremely important for all Parent/Guardians to take the time to read this information and speak

to your child(ren) about social distancing, good hand, cough and sneeze hygiene etc, in order to keep everyone within our community as safe as possible.

We are not returning to what Harding Memorial Primary School would have looked like back in March 2020. Our daily routines will be different, decisions have been made (that may not please everyone) in line with guidance given to school from the Department of Education in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. As always, I am sure that you as Parent/Guardians will all work with us as we try to manage our “**new normal**” during the new School Year.

Government guidelines are very clear – **Parents and Visitors must not enter the school building as far as possible** and it is important that **all Adults keep 2 metres apart from each other in the vicinity of the School Playgrounds and do not congregate on or outside School Grounds**. Please make your way into the school grounds and leave as quickly as possible.

➤ **The Harding Memorial Primary School building is closed to all visitors except our Children, Staff and Essential Visiting Workers.**

➤ **All School Parent/Guardians will be actively discouraged from entering our School Building as a means of preventing spread of the virus.**

Instead we encourage communication by all Parent/Guardians by either telephoning the school = 028 90458040 or by emailing info@hardingmemorial.belfast.ni.sch.uk

- **A Delivery Box for “forgotten items” that urgently need to be passed on to our children will be placed each day outside our main Front Door in the Porch Area**
- **You must telephone or email our office to let us know there is something delivered to school in advance. Please make sure all items are labelled with your child’s name.**
- **If you must visit the school to speak to the School Principal about an “Emergency Pastoral Care Issue”, a Face Covering must be worn, and only 1 visitor will be allowed at the School Entrance at a time.**

It is vitally important that parents keep their children home from school when they are experiencing any **symptom of the Coronavirus ie a new continuous cough, high temperature or loss of taste and smell.** Children who are ill at all, should not be sent to school and they will be isolated and sent home immediately if they are found to be ill or become ill during the school day to give our staff and parents confidence that our school is a safe and healthy place to learn and work, especially during current restrictions. **We may appear “fussier about this than normal”, especially for working parents, but we ask for your patience and understanding in advance.**

Our children and staff are encouraged to wash their hands for the recommended twenty seconds (easy way to measure: sing *Happy Birthday* twice), before leaving home, on entry into class, and at regular intervals throughout the day (including, but not limited to, eating/drinking, using the toilet). Paper towels will be provided in classes and our toilets have hand driers to ensure adequate drying of hands to prevent infection. Parents should encourage our children to use them. Handwashing posters will be displayed around the school to act as a visual reminder to our children. Hand sanitiser will be available at all main entrance doors and hand wash will be available in all classrooms and everyone is encouraged to use it as they pass. Depending on the age of our children parents can send our children in with their own hand sanitiser if they wish. Please ensure that this sanitiser is appropriate for any sensitivities your child may have. Disposable tissues are available in each room for both staff and children to use although please send your child in with

their own packet of tissues. Children and staff should sneeze/cough into tissues (never into hands), adhering to the 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' guidance. Used tissues should be put into the bin immediately after use and children should wash their hands afterwards. Children will be reminded not to touch their face (eyes, mouth, nose) with hands that are not clean. Please remind your child(ren) of this at home in order to assist with Staff reinforcement of this message within the School Environment.

PPE is available in school for staff to use when administering first aid or dealing with an unwell child. Our children are not required to wear PPE to school or when in school. School will remain well stocked with liquid anti-bacterial soap, sanitising wipes, anti-bacterial spray, paper towels, toilet roll, tissues, and other PPE equipment. Staff and children may wear face coverings during school if they wish. This is down to individual Parent/ Guardians and Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff preference, however, as mentioned, it is not required. Parent/Guardians should be aware that, if your child(ren) wear face coverings, staff will not monitor this. It is up to Parent/Guardians to talk to children at home about their expectation of children wearing face coverings.

A Summary of Procedures That Will Be Followed If a Child Displays Symptoms of Covid-19 in Harding Memorial Primary School

- Harding Memorial Primary School will contact the Parent/Guardian using the Contact Information Provided to the School at the start of the 2020/2021 School Year. Please ensure that your supplied contact Phone Number has the facility to take Answer Machine messages in case that the School Makes Emergency Contact
- An Adult will supervise the child who will be isolated from others and taken to a well-ventilated area. This will be the School Isolation Room (Room 13 Classroom)
- Any staff member staying with the child will continue to look after them safely until their parent comes to collect them.
- If you are asked to collect your child due to symptoms of COVID 19 developing you will be required to collect them from the Main School Office entrance.
- **Primary School Aged Children should go for a test ASAP. Tests can be booked online at: <https://covid-19.hscni.net/testing>**
- The children within that Primary School Year Group will continue to attend school as their bubble until the outcome of the individual's test result.
- Where the child tests negative, they can return to their class and end their self-isolation **48 hours after their symptoms have gone.**
- ❖ **Where the child tests positive, the rest of their class including affected School Teaching and Non - Teaching Staff will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.**



Testing

Everyone in Northern Ireland with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) is now eligible for testing.

Book a Test