

Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School



Principal: S Cumper
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Monday 13th September 2021

Dear P1 – P7 Parent/Guardians



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Thank you for all of your efforts since the start of this new School Year. Even though we still have the impact of “Covid” hanging over us, we are all working hard as a school community to provide our children with as much normality and stability as we can provide during these continuing times of uncertainty and unexpected challenges. The start of term has not been easy for many children and families within our own school and throughout the Province. The complexities of dealing with COVID-19 have hit us all, once again, as we have returned to community living and responsibility. Undoubtedly there has been a direct outcome to the relaxation of societal restrictions and the consequential mixing of all sorts of groupings without mitigations. Schools are likely to continue to experience a level of disruption over coming weeks.

Thank you all for your cooperation with the P1/P2, P3 and P4 and 5, P6 and P7 drop off and pick up times”. Your support of these organisational routines both at the start and end of the school have made both of these parts of the school day feel much calmer. I have been so impressed and pleased with how well the children have settled in, right across the school, and there is a real sense of relief at being back to some normality amongst both pupils and our school staff. We especially welcome our new Primary 1 children who embark on their exciting journey through primary school and all the new pupils who have joined us in other classes throughout the School. At this early stage of school return, I am keen to maintain regular contact with the wider parent base so that everyone is up to speed with routines, procedures and school life in general. I miss meeting with parents Face to Face both at the start and end of school – but am always available to answer any parental questions or queries via e mail or a follow up telephone call.

On Friday 10th September 2021 I sent out via e mail an Information Letter addressed to each Primary 1 – Primary 7 Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School Parent/Guardian from Professor Michael McBride, Northern Ireland Chief Medical Officer. In this letter he stated that:

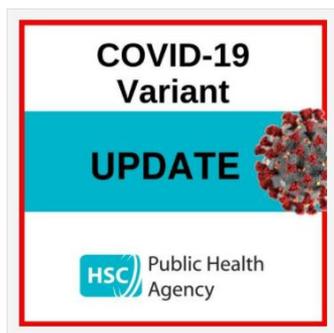
“It is inevitable that there will continue to be cases of COVID in schools - this reflects transmission in the wider community. We know that there will be spikes in infection in some school communities. The PHA will continue to monitor cases in schools and will continue to have arrangements to respond to and support schools with large clusters and outbreaks. This new approach is in line with the approach being taken to schools in England, Scotland and Wales. The risk of COVID infection in any setting cannot be entirely eradicated but it can be reduced. I would remind everyone of the need to continue to follow all of the existing measures in place which continue to keep schools a safe place for our children. These include additional cleaning and hand hygiene, ventilation, the use of face coverings and regular asymptomatic testing. All school staff have now had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated. We all collectively, parents, the school community and health professionals have one key goal in common – to do the best for our children and young people. I welcome these new arrangements which will keep children in school as often as possible.”

We constantly seek to ensure that Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School is a safe place for our children to be.

Thank you for the support you show for all the routines that are in place, and for communicating with us in relation to COVID-19. These shared approaches are an invaluable support as we attempt to minimise the impact of the virus in school and ensure that we continue to provide a **Face To Face Educational Experience for our Pupils**. We all know that our children need to be in school as much as is possible and so the need for care, vigilance and responsibility extends beyond what happens within school. We also recognise that there will be bumps along the way and the journey towards a complete end to the virus is still some distance away. We will endeavour to be open and transparent with you in terms of the public health guidelines within which we are working, the specific routines and mitigations that we have put in place and how school will be organised to return to as much a sense of “normal” as possible.

Essentially, **the responsibility of contact tracing has been removed from Schools** and the PHA will undertake this task themselves. Schools will no longer need to contact the PHA COVID-19 Schools Team. I have attempted to outline a summary of the new arrangements below and thank you in advance for your co-operation as we once again attempt to adapt to new guidelines:

- Schools are no longer required to respond to every COVID-19 case and identify close contacts
- The PHA will instead undertake a “more targeted approach” to the identification of the closest contacts
- From 10.09.21 (Last Friday) the PHA Contact Tracing Service will ask for Parents/Guardians support in identifying close contacts. Parents will now be required to identify a child’s close contacts – both from outside and inside school.
- Schools are NO LONGER required to contact PHA COVID-19 Schools Team
- Those identified as close contacts will be contacted by PHA by phone or text
- Schools may be contacted by PHA to assist with the identification of close contacts
- **It will be the parents’ responsibility to inform school that they or their child have tested positive and have to self-isolate.**



I wish to highlight the Delta Variant – Key Symptoms which include

- ✓ A fever (high temp – 38 degrees or above)
- ✓ A new cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss or change in your sense of smell or taste
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Aches and pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus may include:

- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Runny or stuffy noses
- ✓ Feeling sick or vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhoea

We continue to have a significant number of inquiries from parents as to whether a child should attend school or not with cold symptoms. The Guidance from the Department of Education advises schools and parents to focus on the **‘Big Three’ symptoms of Covid 19**, which we all know so well now – **A new, continuous cough, raised temperature and loss of taste and/or smell.**

YOU SHOULD BOOK A COVID-19 TEST IF YOUR CHILD HAS:

A HIGH TEMPERATURE

This means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure their temperature).

OR

A NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH

This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if they usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).

OR

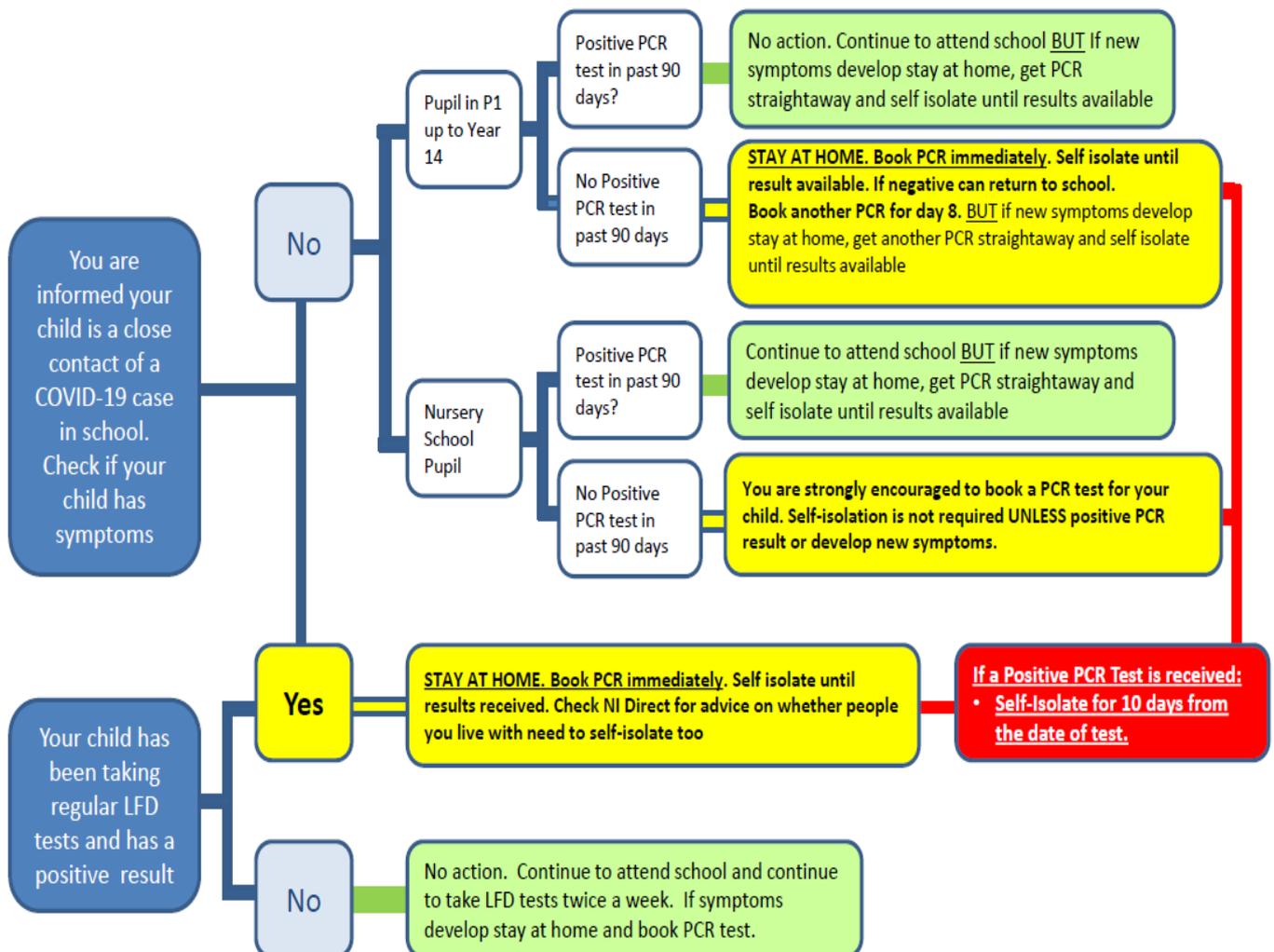
A LOSS OR CHANGE TO THEIR SENSE OF SMELL OR TASTE

This means they've noticed they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 BUT HAS OTHER COLD-LIKE SYMPTOMS, SUCH AS A RUNNY NOSE, THEY DO NOT NEED TO BE TESTED AND THEY OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD DO NOT NEED TO SELF-ISOLATE. YOUR CHILD CAN ATTEND SCHOOL IF FIT TO DO SO.

Flowchart for PARENTS based on NI Direct website guidance

Only use for pupils in a school setting 03/09/2021



However, it is important that we do not conflate every runny nose, sore throat, headache, blocked nose and sneeze etc. with Covid 19. In situations where you suspect your child may simply have a cold, a common sense approach is advised – keep them from school for a day or two, observe and see how things progress and go from there. If, at that point, one or all of the ‘Big Three’ symptoms develop or worsen, then you should probably seek further advice from your child’s doctor or PHA.

It’s a confusing time for all of us and as the term progresses, we will also in all likelihood, experience the winter stomach virus (Norovirus), causing vomiting and diarrhoea. **The instruction in cases of vomiting and/or diarrhoea is that your child should NOT return to school until 48 hours after the last symptom, even if they feel fine sooner than 48 hours.** We have previously had situations where parents did not, regrettably, follow this instruction, leading to large outbreaks in individual classes. If your child is sent to school and it becomes clear to staff that they have experienced vomiting or diarrhoea within the last 48 hours, **you will be requested to collect them from school.** For the good of everyone in our school community, please adhere to these instructions. We would like to thank all Parent/Guardians in advance for their support of School in this matter.



Harding Memorial Primary School has decided to use the ICT premium programme “Seesaw Plus” to help further develop the communication between School and Parents and Pupils during the incoming 2021/2022 School Year. Seesaw is an educational platform that allows schools and pupils to engage with parents and carers to create an online environment which is intended to. Increasingly, we will look to communicate with Parent/Guardians solely using electronic means –School Text Message, School website (www.hardingmemorial.org.uk) and Seesaw. To ensure that you receive all of the up to date information in a timely fashion, **it is crucial that we hold your most mobile telephone number.** Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School is very appreciative of the excellent support we receive from our Parent/Guardians. This support is a major contributor to the educational value of our school and is greatly appreciated by both Staff and Governors. We believe that the education of our children is a partnership between Home and School and consequently we feel that it would be beneficial for Class Teachers to hold **“Virtual Parent/Guardian Curriculum Meetings”** at the start of the new School Year. These Class Curriculum Meetings will be held via **“Zoom”** and the dates and times for these meetings are as follows:

Class	Teacher	Date	Time
P7	Mrs Murray	Wednesday 15 th September	7.00pm – 7.20pm
P3	Mrs McCormick, Mrs Casserly	Monday 20 th September	4.00pm – 4.20pm
P6	Mrs Kelly, Miss Stevenson	Monday 20 th September	5.00pm – 5.20pm
P4	Mr Heatley, Mrs Baird	Tuesday 21 st September	6.00pm – 6.20pm
P2	Mrs Heatley	Wednesday 22 nd September	6.00pm – 6.20pm
P1	Mrs McMullan	Thursday 23 rd September	7.00pm – 7.30pm
P5	Miss Woodside Mrs McMullan	Monday 27 th September	7.00pm – 7.20pm

We would encourage all Parents to be on time as these Zoom Meetings will start punctually at their respective times. We would also appeal to parents not to seek an individual consultation with the Teacher during these Parent Curriculum Zoom Information Meetings.

- **The ZOOM MEETING CODES will be e mailed to Parents via the School E Mail System in advance of these Virtual Curriculum Meetings.**
- **PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL MICS WIL BE MUTED DURING THESE MEETINGS.**

If you have any queries/concerns now or throughout the year, please do not hesitate to contact your Child's Class Teacher via Seesaw and we can then arrange a Telephone appointment for you with your Child's Class Teacher.

End of School Pickup Arrangements

Please remember that Primary 1, Primary 2 and Primary 3 children should be collected from their individual school entrances. No child from P1, P2 and P3 will be allowed to leave school without a Parent/Minder being identified. Primary 4 to Primary 7 children are permitted to leave school unaccompanied by an adult, **but we would expect any pupil from P4 to P7 Pupil to come back into school if they are unsure whether or not they should have been "picked up" by a recognised Parent/Guardian.** Given current circumstances, opportunities to speak to your child's class teacher are less than normal. If there is an issue that you need to speak to your child's teacher about, you should, in the first instance, contact the school office on 02890458040 and arrangements can be made for the staff member in question to return your call as soon as they can, but it should be recognised that all Teaching Staff have classroom commitments both during and after the normal school day.

We look forward to working with both Parents and Pupils to achieve another successful School Year at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School. If you have any queries or worries concerning your child's education, please do not hesitate to contact the School Principal at your earliest possible convenience. Thank you again for all of your support and cooperation during this early part of the new school year.

Yours sincerely
Mr Stephen Cumper
Principal
Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School

