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**Everyone Is
Important In
Our School**

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Monday 23rd November 2020

Dear P1 – P7 Parent/Guardian

We hope that you are all keeping well and that the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 are not having too much of a negative impact on both you and your extended family. For our school to remain open it is really important that all users continue to follow the well established procedures for social distancing, including using the correct school entry and exit systems and keeping each other safe. Following the recent comments by the Northern Ireland Minister of Education, it is pleasing to see that face coverings are being worn more frequently by adults around the school grounds. The wearing of face coverings on the school grounds is not something that I can enforce, but it is something that I would very strongly encourage in all adults accessing our school grounds.

We were very pleased to have recently celebrated Anti-Bullying Week in Harding Memorial Primary School with the theme - "United Against Bullying". This year, probably more than ever, we have witnessed the positive power that society can have when we come together to tackle a common challenge. By channelling our collective power, through shared efforts and shared ambitions, we can reduce bullying together. Parents, Pupils and Staff all have a part to play in coming together to make a difference. We are all a piece in a puzzle, and together, we're United Against Bullying. We are very proud of the HMPS Motto: *Everyone Is Important In Our School.*

School Attendance Information Update

The current 2020/2021 School Year could be regarded as "a particularly tricky year for school attendance". It is obviously very important that all children come to school as regularly as possible. However, to add to the confusion, it is equally important **that children do not come to school if they have any symptoms of Covid-19 or have tested positive.** Each Half Term, the Education Welfare Service (EA's attendance support team) make contact with myself at school to ask for a list of children with attendance below 85%. We must comply with this request. I then discuss the attendance of each child identified as having school attendance below 85% individually with the EWS Officer to determine if EWS intervention is formally required in order to ensure that the child's attendance increases. It is very important that, if your child/children is/are not in school, even for 1 day, that Parent/Guardians make contact with the school via telephone, e mail or Seesaw to explain why the child/children was/were missing from school. This provides School with the information that we need to discuss a child's attendance with the EWS. If HMPS is not provided with this information, then we could have no explanation for the absences, and, if a child's attendance is below 85%, the EWS may then request that I refer that child onto their service. The School will be sending out an email to those P1 -P7 Parent/Guardians who have children with School Attendance levels of below 85% at the end of November 2020.

- **However please let me stress once again that if you or anybody in your household or anybody that you have been in contact with displays symptoms of Covid19, you must not attend Harding Memorial Primary School.**
- **You must also let our school know if you or a member of your household returns a positive test result for Covid19**



Christmas Celebrations at Harding Memorial Primary School

Obviously this year due to the current Covid19 social distancing restrictions we won't be able to invite Parent/Guardians to School to enjoy the traditional Christmas concert performances by our children. However, we are still planning to celebrate Christmas with the pupils and would propose that we bring you a **"Digital Christmas Performance"** this year. **We are going to perform a Christmas Show in the School Assembly Hall on Wednesday 9th December 2020** which will feature performances by all P1 – P7 Classes. We have hired a professional cameraman to video this show and will then be intending to upload the Christmas Show onto the Internet to enable School Parent/Guardians to be able share in our Christmas Celebrations. Harding Memorial Primary School will be seeking Parent/Guardian Permission for all P1 – P7 children to enable them to participate in this Christmas Video Performance and also School Open Day Video Resource. Further information will be sent out to each Parent/Guardian via Seesaw for P1 – P7 pupils and Parental Permission Information will be required to be submitted to each Class Teacher via Seesaw.

Please note that the return of all Parental Permission Notes will be required in advance of Monday 7th December as any child who has not has a permission note returned will not be able to perform.

Reminder About Christmas Cards Arrangements

As we come towards the Christmas season there is, as always, lots going on in school as we look forward to celebrating Christmas. Although we have been doing our best to find alternative ways of enjoying the usual activities there are some that unfortunately do not lend themselves to substitution. **Therefore, we wish to advise parents that, this year, children will be unable to bring Christmas cards into school to swap with their friends.** We understand that this will be a disappointment to many who love to write and distribute their cards but in the present circumstances we, as a school, are unable to facilitate this. We hope you will support us as we endeavour to keep all of the school community safe and well especially in the run up to Christmas. It may be a possible option for children to design their own Christmas Card to share with their Class Teacher and peer group via Seesaw.

General Information

As we move towards December it is clear that the weather is getting colder and wetter. This means that all children must come to school dressed appropriately for the weather. Warm coats should be worn even if children come by car as it is very beneficial for children that they get exercise outdoors at break and lunch time if at all possible. Please ensure all children have access to a coat in school.

- ✓ **We would appreciate if all clothing items have a name to identify them and that your child knows where the name label identification is to be found. It can be challenging to identify individual clothing items as a number of our school pupils "wear similar types of clothing".**

Your Child's Online World

We would like to make all P1 – P7 School Parents aware about the following source of information:

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety

This website offers some simple guidance about the risks your child might face online, some advice about what you can do to keep them safe, and where you can go for more help and support. School would recommend a key message from the NSPCC about the importance of all adults being aware of what their primary school age child/children is/are "seeing and doing online" and to make sure that they do not see or do anything that is **not age appropriate**.



If you know of any Parent/Guardian who has a child that is due to start Primary 1 in September 2021, please encourage them to make contact with the Principal of Harding Memorial Primary School so that we can arrange a telephone appointment with them to discuss our School. We are always keen to provide a Question and Answer Session about the future plans of HMPS.

Admissions for Primary 1 will open in January 2021. We would normally hold a series of "Open Events" to showcase Harding Memorial Primary School in December and January, but unfortunately once again Covid has impacted on our traditional arrangements. If you are due to send your child to Primary 1 in September 2021, or have a friend or family member who will be looking to apply for a Primary School in September, "*please feel free to send them my way*". I am willing to have an extended conversation with any and all Prospective Primary 1 Parent/Guardians about future plans for our school, including providing an update on the "**Process of Transformation to a Controlled Integrated Primary School.**"

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/area-planning/pre-publication-consultations?page=1>

