

# Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School



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Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021

Dear Parent/Guardians

Welcome back to the start of a new school year. We hope that everyone has had a really enjoyable summer. We are delighted to extend a particular welcome to new Children and Parents. The pupils look very well in their uniforms - thank you for the effort you have made. As Parent/Guardians you play a very important role in your child's education. We hope to maintain and strengthen our traditional close Home/School links at **Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School** during the current 2021/2022 School Year. We are pleased to confirm that the decision by the Minister of Education to approve Development Proposal 657 has meant that **Harding Memorial has formally transformed to Controlled Integrated Status with effect from the 1st September 2021.**

During my time as Principal of our School there have been considerable changes and developments. I personally believe that Harding Memorial has a very special "niche market place" within the local school community. We are blessed to have Parent/Guardians who have high aspirations for their Children. Our School has maintained a good reputation over a very long period and this reputation for quality is in no small measure due to the dedication and commitment of all School Staff and the support of our Parents to both the Pastoral and Curriculum aspects of day-to-day School Life. I thank you for your continuing support for **Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School.**

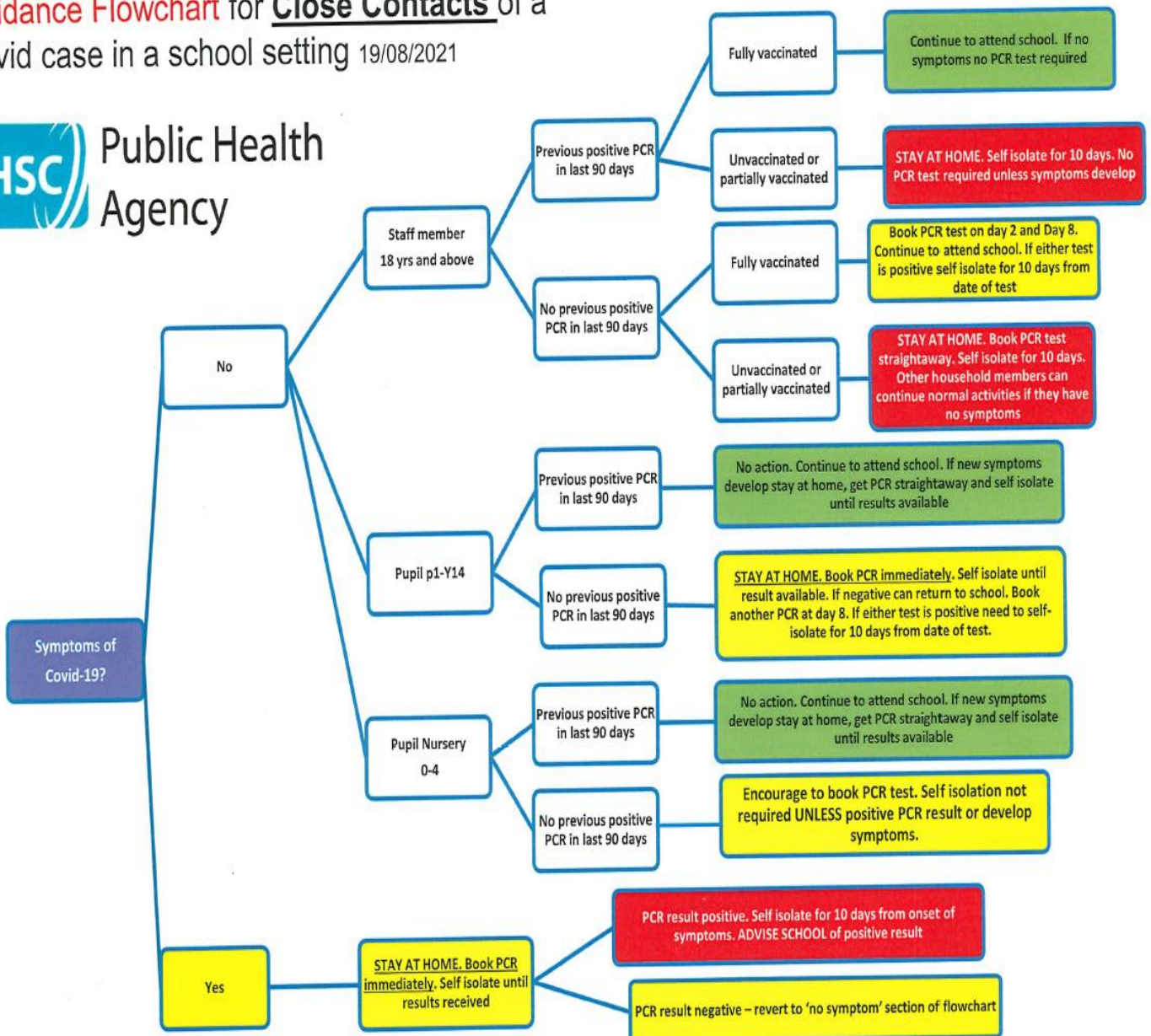
The previous 2020/2021 school year was not without its challenges, especially during the period of Home/Remote Learning. But we were very fortunate that Harding Memorial managed to avoid any classes being required to self-isolate because of Covid Infection being present in our School. We would like to inform Parent/Guardians that the Public Health Agency have recently shared the following guidance below with schools on how to manage a positive case in the school setting. This new guidance is quite complex as this reflects the ongoing circumstances and changes with changes with vaccination status etc. We thank you in advance for your co-operation with these procedures.

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 "Covid". We have endeavoured throughout the Summer Vacation 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. During 2021/2022 our children will be playing and mixing together with their classmates in Key Stage Peer Groups e.g P1 and P2 Foundation Stage Pupils Together in their Playground, P3 and P4 Key Stage 1 Pupils Together in their Playground and P5, P6 and P7 Key Stage 2 Pupils Together in their Playground. However despite all the Infection Control Mitigation Measures that will be in place in September 2021, 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. We will continue to prioritise communication with Parent/Guardians and we trust that you will feel that you too can communicate considerately and confidentially with Staff in HMIPS.

# GUIDANCE FLOWCHART FOR CLOSE CONTACTS OF A COVID CASE IN A SCHOOL SETTING

- **If you or your child has symptoms of COVID, book a PCR test**
- If the result is positive, you must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms
- If your child is a CLOSE CONTACT of a positive COVID case, has no symptoms and has NOT has a positive PCR test in the last 90 days, you must stay at home and book a PCR test immediately & self-isolate until the result is available.
- If your child is a CLOSE CONTACT of a positive COVID case, has no symptoms and HAS HAD a positive PCR test in the last 90 days, you do NOT need to take any action. If new symptoms develop, book a PCR Test.

Guidance Flowchart for Close Contacts of a Covid case in a school setting 19/08/2021

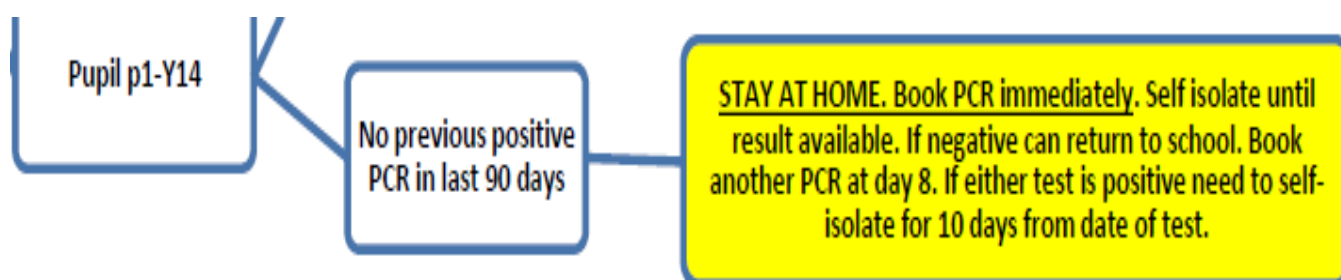


➤ **Please note that this page has been added to this letter as a result of a confirmed Positive Covid Pupil Case reported to the School this morning – Wed 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2021**

As soon as School was informed about the positive test result we immediately contacted the Education Authority who told us that all the Close Contacts of the Confirmed Positive Case must **“not come into school”**. This was literally last minute information received from EA at 8.40am. We then emailed all the Parents of that class to inform them that they were required to stay away from School today – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

Obviously the lateness of this communication has caused inconvenience for the Parents of children in that class and they will receive additional correspondence from the School as soon as we have received guidance from the EA and PHA.

In the meantime I hope that the School Community will understand that it is STATUTORY that School must follow EA and PHA Covid 19 Infection Control Procedures and state that pupils, if they have had no positive PCR Test in the last 90 days, must **STAY AT HOME and book a PCR Test immediately**



## **Please see below a letter for Parent/Guardians from the Minister of Education**

To: All Parents/Carers

This has been a challenging 18 months for all of us, and especially our children and young people. I want to start by taking this opportunity to, once again, pay tribute to the resilience and positive attitude that our children and young people and their families have shown throughout the pandemic. I hope that we can return to a more normal experience for our children and young people.

To help ensure that the new academic year is as safe, productive and enjoyable as possible for all concerned, my Department has revised its COVID-19 guidance to schools on 18 August available [here](#). This revised guidance reflects the decisions made by the Executive in relation to the new term, in line with the more general relaxation of measures in wider society. As there is still a high level of underlying infection in the community, we cannot yet remove all of the protective measures that have been in place. However, the guidance will allow schools and education settings to develop local strategies that is best suited to them.

I would encourage all parents/carers to help us keep our children and young people and educational settings safe by following the guidance. You can do this by:

- Keeping any young person, with symptoms of COVID-19 at home until they can get a PCR test at a local testing centre;
- Encouraging those young people aged 16 and over to avail of the vaccination;
- Encouraging young people in post-primary schools to participate in regular asymptomatic testing;
- Encouraging those young people in post-primary schools to carry out a test before returning to school using the Lateral Flow Tests at home;
- Availing of the testing for Special Schools (using LAMP testing) which will resume in the new term;
- Arranging for children and young people to isolate if they have been a close contact and to take a PCR test. If the test is negative, there is no longer a need to self-isolate for ten days and they can return to school; and
- Ensuring that post-primary aged young people continue to wear face coverings. The Executive has agreed that this mitigation should remain in place until 8 October, when the position will be reviewed. However, even after that date, face-coverings will still be required in corridors and congested areas, and on transport to schools or other education settings.

If your child is willing to take a test before school returns, test kits can be obtained using one of the following methods (this is for the initial return to school only):

- Collect from one of the Local collection sites operated as part of the National testing Programme or local government, using the Link [Find where to get rapid lateral flow tests - NHS \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](https://www.test-and-trace.nhs.uk) to identify the closest location;
- Order using **LFD Direct**. [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

Subsequent supplies of LFDs, where required, would then be issued via the school.

The changes for the new term are an important and careful first step in what I hope will be a safe and sustainable return to school for our children.

I wish all pupils, their parents and carers, and all education staff well in the new academic year.

*Michelle McIlveen*

**MICHELLE MCILVEEN MLA**

**Minister of Education**

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**We are not yet returning to what Primary School Education would have looked like “Pre - Covid” in our School.** Our daily routines will continue to 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 incoming 2021/2022 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. If a Parent/Guardian has a non-urgent question or query then a phone call should be made or an e mail sent to school and then school will respond in a timely manner. **If it is an “urgent issue” – then the Parent should “wait outside school” until the Principal or a member of the School Management Team is available.** I would be encouraging all School Stakeholders to adhere to our ongoing procedures to limit the impact of Covid within our school community.

- **No Parent/Guardian or Adult should access school without invitation** and any Parent/Guardian granted access to school will be expected to use an “**Appropriate Face Mask Covering.**” whilst inside our school building (unless they are exempt from mask usage)

## Parents in Partnership

Our aim at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School is to ensure that your child fulfils their potential and develops in a happy, confident and successful manner. In order to develop further the Home/School relationship we would hope that parents will:

- ✓ Encourage self-discipline by reinforcing the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. Good behaviour is a necessary condition for effective learning to take place. It is the school policy that discipline should be based on promoting good behaviour as well as addressing unacceptable behaviour, with the underlying emphasis on respect for self, for other pupils and for adults. We aim to develop a caring, happy and disciplined environment that will be conducive to learning. When children behave in an unacceptable manner a clearly graded procedure is followed and, where serious misconduct is concerned, parents will be involved either by receiving a written report from school or by being invited to come to discuss the matter.
  - ✓ Ensure regular attendance
  - ✓ Inform us of any changes at home which might affect your child's attitude/behaviour at school e.g. family illness, bereavement etc.
- ❖ **Mr Cumper is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Mrs Baird is the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection in Harding Memorial**

**If you have any concerns regarding the welfare of your child please speak to either Mr Cumper or Mrs Baird.** If an emergency arises in school, our priority will be the welfare and safety of the child. Our next priority will be to contact you. If we cannot do this, we will act in the best interest of the child. If necessary, a member of staff will accompany a child in an ambulance to hospital and sign any necessary forms for emergency treatment. Please contact the School Office if you **do not want** Harding Memorial Primary School to accept this responsibility.

## School Dinners – Entitlement To Free School Meals

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

Children do not have to take dinners every day and there is no distinction made between paid and free dinners. The children of parents who are in receipt of income support or child tax credit (not working tax credit) are entitled to free dinners. Applications can be made using the following link <https://freeschoolmealsanduniforms.eani.org.uk> By doing this the children can take free dinners if and when they wish. The impact of the school funding strategy means that Harding Memorial will receive a significant increase to our budget for children entitled to free meals. Therefore it is important that the parents of pupils entitled to free dinners complete this application form even if they intend to provide their children with packed lunches.

- ❖ **Please do not hesitate to contact the Principal if you would like to discuss this matter further.**
- ❖ **Parents of pupils in Primary 1 should complete the form as soon as possible to ensure that their children can receive free meals in October after their children begin to stay until 2.00pm.**

**✓ If you feel your child/children may be entitled to free school meals and require further information, please contact Mr Cumper or Mrs Shannon in the School Office as soon as possible.**

## Healthy Break

We will be continuing the school policy of promoting a healthy break for pupils during the school day. We accept that having a healthy break will not in itself transform a child's lifestyle or health but we do believe it has potential to be habit forming, realistic and achievable. Obviously children will still eat whatever you as parents decide at all other times but by raising awareness of healthy eating and by practising it in school we would hope that there may be long term benefits for our children. Please remember that Harding Memorial is a **'Nut-Free'** zone. This means we must ask that all children in the school should refrain from bringing any food that contains nuts into school. I appreciate that this may cause some inconvenience but I know that I will be able to count on your support in this matter.

## Medical Information / Illness

If a pupil has a medical condition, upon admission to the school or subsequently, parents must submit full details to the school office. It cannot be over emphasised that parents must provide all relevant information in writing. If pupils are ill prior to the start of the school day, please do not send them to school. Our experience is that in many such situations, pupils have to be sent home again. The school would wish to avoid the spread of illness within the confined community of pupils and staff. On occasions your child may have medicine prescribed by the doctor but yet be fit enough to attend school. **If you require your child to receive medication in school, please contact the Principal.** We would request that any medication is appropriately labelled with your child's name, the smallest possible required dosage and clear written instructions regarding the administration of the medication.

## Mobile Phones

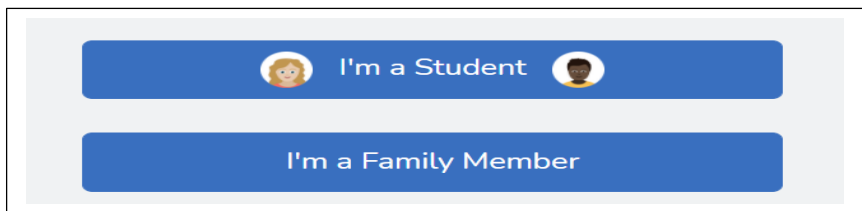
It is school policy that pupils should **not bring any mobile phones to school.** Any parent who requires their child to have access to a mobile phone in school for a particular reason should contact the Principal in writing at their earliest possible convenience. I thank all parents in advance for their anticipated support and understanding in this important matter of school administration.

## Jewellery

Children are discouraged from the wearing of jewellery in school. In particular we were concerned last year by the number of children who were wearing rings in school. Hoop earrings are also discouraged. We hope that parents will continue to support school in this policy as the safety and wellbeing of children in school is our primary concern.

## Physical Education

At Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School we feel that Physical education is crucial to health, fitness and well-being. It builds strength, maintains mobility, and challenges body and mind as well as providing a foundation for active living. Our School is fortunate to have excellent PE facilities both inside and outside and we would be seeking to ensure that all children in our school will have regular access to PE within the curriculum on their return to school due to the positive impact that physical exercise can have on young people's health and wellbeing. It would our intention that P1 – P7 children would come to school **"wearing their PE Kit on their designated PE Timetabled Day"** as they previously did last year. Additional information about this issue will be distributed to individual classes by their Class Teacher(s) via Seesaw in due course



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

- ✓ empower pupil to take ownership of their learning and to reflect on their progress over time.
- ✓ give pupils tools to show what they know in the way that works best for them.
- ✓ inspire pupils to try their best by providing an audience for their work beyond the classroom.
- ✓ create a meaningful home-school connection so that parents can better support their child’s learning.

**❖ Seesaw will continue to be used as the main digital service to send “Homework” for all Primary 1 – Primary 7 pupils at the start of the current School Year.**

Parents and Children will need to go to the seesaw website <https://web.seesaw.me>. Then please select the second option to log in as a student. **At this stage Children or Parents should enter the 16 letter code that will be given out to all P1 – P7 Pupils this week.** The children can then use Seesaw to share and upload work, photos, videos and notes.

**What can children do?** – The children can click on the green + sign, this will give them choices to take live photos or videos, or to upload photos and videos from their device (computer, phone, tablet). Children can also add ‘notes’ if they want to communicate with the class teacher. When children upload to their journal, only the child, the class teacher and the child’s family members using Seesaw can access the journal. No other pupils can see your child’s journal. Any comments made on the journal by your child or family members will need to be approved by the class teacher before they are published.

**Uploading work, photos, videos and notes** – When you or your child want to upload work through the ‘student account’, you will need to click on the green + sign. This will give you options of what you can upload. Simply choose what you are uploading and click on the green tick in the top right corner. The item will be published once the teacher has approved the content.

I appreciate that everyone is still adapting to this new way of learning. Please be patient as we navigate our way together through this and please do not become overwhelmed and we are happy to help you every step of the way. **A Step by Step Seesaw Parent Information Guide** is available to view on the School Website: [www.hardingmemorial.org.uk](http://www.hardingmemorial.org.uk)

### **End of School Pickup Arrangements**

- Please remember that P1 – P3 children should be collected from their individual school entrance. No child from P1 to P3 will be allowed to leave school without a parent/minder being identified.
- **We would expect any pupil from Primary 4 to Primary 7 to come back into school if they have not been collected by a recognised Parent/Guardian.**



# COVID INFECTION CONTROL REMINDER

- High Temperature, New / Persistent Cough, Loss of taste or smell – Stay at home, isolate and book a test. **Please do not send your Child/Children to Harding Memorial Primary School if they are unwell, particularly if they have any covid symptoms.**
- Inform school immediately and advise us of the result as soon as possible.
- Pupils do not return until symptoms have gone for at least 48 hours – even if the test result was negative.
- Where a child has been in school it is essential that Parents inform the School by email immediately if they becomes unwell with Covid symptoms or are being tested, even if the result is negative
- **We may appear “fussier about this than normal”, especially for working parents, but we ask for your patience and understanding in advance during these most challenging of times for both our School and wider society in Northern Ireland**

## **➤ What if my child displays symptoms of Covid 19 (new, persistent cough, high temperature, loss of taste and/or smell) ?**

If your child (or anyone else in your household) displays any of the symptoms of Covid 19, you must keep them from school and follow the PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infections. The executive had previously decided that if a child was identified as a close contact of a positive Covid case, they would no longer have to self-isolate for 10 days. Instead, they should self-isolate and book a PCR test. If the PCR test is positive they should isolate for 10 days, but if the result is negative they can end their self-isolation. **However, the new Department of Education Guidance does not provide detailed advice for schools on the new arrangements.** The Minister of Education has stated that the PHA was currently "preparing guidance" for schools on the new self-isolation arrangements to ensure they "applied equally to all pupils in each year group". However, she did not state when schools would receive the new PHA guidance. Once this information has been received by our School, that information will be shared with all Parent/ Guardians and School Stakeholders.

## **➤ What if my child displays Covid 19 symptoms while at school ?**

If your child displays Covid 19 symptoms at school, he or she will be moved to our School Isolation Room (Room 13) and you will be contacted to collect your child from there. You should then follow the PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection

- ✓ 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.

Yours sincerely  
Mr S Cumper  
School Principal