

# ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Telephone (028) 677 38690

Fax (028) 677 38067

[www.stmarysps.com](http://www.stmarysps.com)



NEWTOWNBUTLER  
ENNISKILLEN  
CO. FERMANAGH  
BT92 8JJ

MAIL: [info@stmarysntb.newtownbutler.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stmarysntb.newtownbutler.ni.sch.uk)

20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you all for the understanding and support you have shown the school over the past week, not least the effort which you made to collect work for children at the allotted times and the great appreciation and many good wishes which have been shared.

These are very uncertain and indeed worrying times for all of us. I'm afraid that schools are hearing announcements at the same time as you and there has been some lack of clarity. The decision to close all schools, reinforces the decision to close St Mary's this week. It is essential that our pupils, families and staff are able to work in the safest environment at this time, where social distancing, cough and sneeze etiquette and thorough and frequent handwashing can be effectively practised.

It is clear that normal school is suspended, probably for quite sometime. It has hit the school staff hard that our school community will not be here in the usual way. I am also very conscious that those special days for your children, for you and for us, such as Confirmation, First Holy Communion, Sports Day, the Leavers' Mass and our transition activities will not happen this school years.

I want to offer assurance that teachers are committed to providing an on-going remote learning service for your children over the coming months. I have no doubt that the facilities and strategies used will evolve over the coming months. I can reassure you however that we are in the fortunate position of having already invested in a significant level on online licences. While these will be used more intensively and indeed innovatively, it is good that pupils are already familiar with many of the systems.

While teachers will be directing their classes to various online platforms, we have created a central home learning area on our website. It can be found under the Parent or Pupil Tab. There is a page for each class. Teachers will provide an overview of learning for their class, along with helpful attachments, links to other websites and direction on where specific class activities can be accessed. Please ensure that you activate the seesaw app, as it is being very widely used. In preparation, all pupils were also given any passwords etc which they might need on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March. The Home Learning page can be accessed through a password which will be text to each family. Links are also being added specifically for SEN pupils for example from the EA SpLD Service (for pupils with Dyslexic tendencies). Please encourage children to read as much as possible. I cannot over emphasise the benefit of reading. Most importantly I have no doubt that you are reassuring your children that this situation will pass, everyone is doing the best to keep them safe and we all look forward to returning to normal school life.

We are exploring ways in which parents and pupils can most effectively stay in touch with school and I will keep you updated on this.

Take care and God bless you and your families,

Paula Kelly