



Tobermore Primary School

6 Maghera Road, Tobermore, BT45 5QB

Tel: 028 7964 2254

Website: www.tobermoreps.com

Email: info@tobermoreps.magherafelt.ni.sch.uk

Principal: Mr. Ian Cheevers



21 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Ref: Emergency Support for Children of Key Workers in Primary School

On Thursday 19 March, the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA, made a statement outlining how schools will close from the end of the school day today (Friday), however, will open with skeleton staff on Monday 23 March to support identified Key Workers. Provision of any level of service will be dependent on staff availability and the school may have to be closed if this becomes a problem.

Please be aware that schools have received very little guidance, training, support or resources and are now being expected to provide care for children as the virus spreads. We have no access to, nor have we been provided with protective clothing or medical advice. Up until this point we have been happy to plan and work to help children, but now feel vulnerable and have grave concerns about the safety of staff and their families, pupils and the wider school community. We want you to consider the message in this letter seriously before making a decision to apply for a place.

Schools will not be able to operate a "normal" school day and will be offering a childminding type service through this period. Many of our schools are already operating with a significant reduction in staffing and this will probably continue to get worse over time.

Below is the most recent advice we have received. Please read very carefully!

Key worker parents requiring care provision:

- Many parents working in the identified key workers list **may** be able to ensure that their child is kept at home.
- **EVERY CHILD WHO CAN BE SAFELY CARED FOR AT HOME SHOULD BE.**
- There is no requirement for identified key worker parents to take up this offer or send their children to school if they do not wish to.
- Any children previously withdrawn from school on the basis of risk should not return.
- **Only children with parents working as Key Workers and where they cannot find an alternative should send their children to school.**
- In single parent families, the main carer **MUST** be a Key Worker and be required at work.
- Every alternative childcare arrangement should be explored before deciding to send children to school. School should, in effect, be a **LAST RESORT**. This is in order to comply with general **public health advice on social distancing**.
- Wrap around services will not be available and school will only be open to pupils from 9am-3pm



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- You must be in an emergency situation where no family members, e.g. husband, wife, partner, older children, extended family members, friends cannot support.
- Children must bring their home learning packs with them.
- Children will be following social distancing advice and will sit at least two metres away from others. They will have outside time, but not playing in close proximity to each other.
- Children will be required to wear their school uniform
- Children should bring a packed lunch with them to school. School dinners may be provided for those children attending who wish to avail of this service, but as yet we have no definitive information on this.

We have been asked to communicate to parents that any decision to send a child to school **must** be based on trust and we appeal to parents not to abuse the service to further promote the spread of the virus and put staff and other children at risk.

We would ask that you pay attention to all the points outlined above before applying to send your child to school. Please also remember PHA advice must be followed at all times and children/families must follow all self-isolation advice. Schools will also follow PHA advice should anyone display symptoms or take unwell during attendance.

Please also ensure that you have an emergency contact in place in case your child/children need to be collected due to circumstances surrounding the current health pandemic.

If you are a key worker and you meet the criteria and wish to avail of this reduced provision, please contact the school via the email address below before **6pm on Saturday 21st March**:

icheevers766@c2kni.net

Your email should outline how each of the parents fulfil the criteria of a "key worker" and the days which you will need the childcare provision. Reply slip is found on the website as another document.

Please note that we cannot offer any guarantees that your child will not become infected as a direct result of you sending your child to school within this new school system. If advice changes over the weekend, we will update you.

Yours faithfully

Mr I Cheevers
Principal



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List of Key Workers as outlined in information to schools on Thursday 19 March 2020

EVERY CHILD WHO CAN BE SAFELY CARED FOR AT HOME SHOULD BE. There is no requirement for key workers to take up this offer or send their children to school if they do not require this service. Schools should in effect be a **LAST RESORT.**

Please work with us to ensure schools operate with a limited number of children and staff.

Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector.

Education and Childcare. This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response.

Public Safety and National Security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, Prison Service and other national security roles.

Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response.

Utilities and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies, to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal.

Food and Other Necessary Goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (eg. Hygiene, medical etc.)

Other workers essential to delivery key public services.

Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response.