



THANK YOU

I just wanted to take a moment to say a huge thank you for your support as we re-opened school. School is meant to be full of children and we are just delighted to have all of our pupils back in school.

It would also be appropriate for me to say a sincere thanks to the staff team who worked tirelessly and went over and above their contracted hours in order to ensure that school was as safe as possible for the children to return.

We will continue to do everything in our power, with your support, in order to ensure that the children are able to stay safe while they are in

COMMUNICATION

- Initially I intend to send home a weekly update each Friday (this may change over time but I will keep you informed) through the school website and the SchoolsNI App.
- Traditionally we would have held curriculum evenings in early September. Given the circumstances this year we will be unable to invite you into school, however the teachers will post a short video on Seesaw on Thursday 17 September in order to introduce themselves and to outline issues which are pertinent to their year groups.
- Teachers will communicate through Seesaw, sending reminders which are pertinent to their class. Make sure that you sign up to Seesaw Family and also Seesaw Class.
- If you have a query or concern, then you can contact the teacher directly through Seesaw.
- If it continues to be a concern or there is an emergency, please contact me by phoning the school on 02893353280.
- Below is an updated version of the holidays for 2020/21. We were due to have a school training day on Friday 25 September but this has been postponed until Monday 22 February. Half Term October, Christmas, Half Term February and Easter holidays are unchanged. With starting earlier this year we will now finish for the summer holidays on Friday 25 June instead of Wednesday 30 June.

DROPPING OFF AND COLLECTING CHILDREN

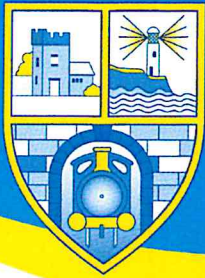
Thank you for your understanding and complying with the one-way system in the playground. Again, I really appreciate your support!! Please remember to follow social distancing rules when collecting your children. **The Y3/4 playground is perfect for collecting children but please move to the top of the playground keeping the top of the front path (leading from the gate to the Y3/4 playground) free. Indeed, please keep the front path and the front gate free at all times.**

As I have stated in previous newsletters:

- Y1 & Y2 children should be collected from the Y1/2 playground. Teachers will remain with them until collected.
- Y3 & Y4 children should be collected from the Y3/4 playground. Teachers will remain with them until collected.
- Y5, Y6 & Y7 children will be allowed to walk to the gate themselves allowing you to arrange an appropriate place to meet them. It is really important that you impress upon your child the importance of coming back into school if no-one is there to collect them or they aren't sure what to do. A teacher will always be on the gate until all of the children are dispersed. Alternatively, you can collect them in the Y3/4 playground.

ILLNESS

I appreciate how difficult it is to decide what to do when your child is ill. Unfortunately, neither myself nor the staff are able to advise you whether your child should attend school or not, although I would encourage you to err on the side of caution and I am happy to chat with you about it. It might also be better not to seek advice on parent WhatsApp groups as this appears to be causing anxiety amongst parents. Please see the flow chart below which is specific to WPS and based on the DE version which is also included.

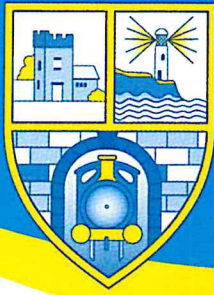


Whitehead
Primary School
& Nursery Unit

'LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER'

HOLIDAY CALENDAR 2020-21

SCHOOL BEGINS	SCHOOL CLOSES	HOLIDAY (dates are inclusive)
Monday, 24 August 2020	Friday, 23 October 2020	Halloween Half Term Monday, 26 October - Friday, 30 October 2020 (4 days + 1 staff training day)
Monday, 2 November 2020	Tuesday, 22 December 2020 No school dinners	Christmas Wednesday, 23 December 2020 – Tuesday, 5 January 2021 (10 days)
Wednesday, 6 January 2021	Friday, 12 February 2021	Winter Half Term Monday, 15 February – Monday, 22 February 2021 (4 days + 2 staff training days)
Tuesday, 23 February 2021	Thursday, 1 April 2021 No school dinners	Easter Friday, 2 April – Friday, 16 April 2021 (10 days + 1 staff training day)
Monday, 19 April 2021	Friday, 30 April 2021	May Day Monday, 3 May 2021 (1 day)
Tuesday, 4 May 2021	Thursday, 27 May 2021	Spring Bank Holiday Friday, 28 May - Monday, 31 May 2021 (1 day + 1 staff training day)
Tuesday, 1 June 2021	Friday, 25 June 2021 No school dinners	Summer Holiday 2021



Whitehead

Primary School
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'LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER'

SHOULD I SEND MY CHILD TO SCHOOL OR NOT?

Child has symptoms of the common cold.

Your child is allowed to attend school but err on the side of caution given the current situation. If your child has a heavy cold, it may be appropriate to keep your child at home, allowing them to get over the worst of their cold and for you to monitor their symptoms.

Contact Mrs Lowry or leave a message on the answering phone to explain why your child is absent.

Child has symptoms of Covid-19.

- High Temperature
- New continuous cough
- Loss of taste or smell

DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD INTO SCHOOL.

- Arrange for your child to have a Covid-19 Test.
- Your family must household isolate while you are waiting for the results of the test.
- Before your child can return to school you must inform Mrs Lowry of the results of the test.

Child has vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

Your child should **NOT** attend school until they have had 48 hours without vomiting or diarrhoea.

Contact Mrs Lowry or leave a message on the answering phone to explain why your child is absent.

NEGATIVE

When a child has had a **NEGATIVE** test result and everyone with symptoms who was tested in their household receive a negative result, the child can return to school providing they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours.

PLEASE INFORM MRS LOWRY WHAT DATE YOUR CHILD WILL RETURN TO SCHOOL.

TEST RESULT

INFORM MRS LOWRY

POSITIVE

When a child has had a **POSITIVE** test result:

- They should self-isolate for 10 days and all members of their household for 14 days.
- All children within the same class bubble as the child who tested positive will be advised **NOT** to attend school and will subsequently begin online learning.

WE WILL BE IN CONTACT IN ORDER TO ADVISE WHEN THE CLASS BUBBLE SHOULD RETURN TO SCHOOL.

From the Chief Medical Officer's Office



Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ

Date: 10 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

As parents and carers I appreciate that some of you will be worried and possibly anxious about the reopening of schools. Let me reassure you this concern is natural and wholly expected given the last number of months. It has most certainly been a challenging year for everyone so far.

Now that schools have returned I am writing to provide you with some advice if a child or young person in your care develops symptoms of a common cold or other similar infections during the current pandemic.

The decision to reopen schools was not taken lightly. We considered the scientific and medical evidence alongside the negative impact that closure was having on the health and wellbeing of our children. The broad evidence indicates that child-to-child and child-to-adult transmission of COVID-19 in the classroom is not common.

However we must all be aware that COVID-19 is still active in our communities. It has not gone away and parents, pupils and indeed wider society need to stay vigilant and not become complacent. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring that hygiene, social distancing and all other public health measures continue to be followed.

In order to ensure children and young people do not miss out on their education, it is important to be clear about how COVID-19 symptoms differ from those of other infections that we usually see circulating at this time of the year.

All of us – including parents and the wider school community – must remain vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and understand what actions are required should someone develop symptoms either at home or in the school setting. If your child or anyone in your household develops any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 they should stay home and arrange to get tested as soon as possible –

- A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual) ; or

- A high temperature/fever – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); or
- A loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

Details on how to book a test can be found [here](#).

I would emphasise that if an individual does not have any of the stated symptoms, they do not require a test. Schools should not ask pupils to book a COVID-19 test unless they have one or more of the symptoms above. We are currently experiencing significant demand on our testing programme, it is important that testing is reserved for people who have symptoms of COVID-19 and people who have been advised by our contact tracing or other health services to get tested.

I recognise that at this time of year, it is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate. In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education. In other cases where they may have a heavy cold they may need to take time off to recover. There is no need to contact your General Practitioner or attend other health services unless you are concerned about your child or would normally do for other health reasons.

But they do not need tested for Covid-19 and do not need to self-isolate.

There have been reports recently that ‘tummy bugs’ may be a symptom of COVID-19 in children and young people. Whilst recent research provides useful early findings, there needs to be a wider discussion at a UK wide level about this. You therefore do not currently need to get your child tested.

That said, where a pupil displays gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not attend school until after their symptoms have resolved for at least 2 days (this means they should not have been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days before they return to school). In these instances the pupil and their family should follow the school’s usual attendance policy in respect of these symptoms.

The Department of Education has produced a leaflet, which is enclosed, advising what you should do if your child or anyone you live with has any symptoms of COVID-19.

We can expect that there will be cases of COVID-19 among children and young people in the weeks ahead. When this happens, our teams in the Public Health Agency (PHA) will respond and will work closely with the school involved to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to protect your child, other children and school staff.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all. Parents and carers across Northern Ireland have made monumental efforts to keep themselves, their families and the wider community safe over the past few months – and I thank you all for your ongoing vigilance in this regard. I have no doubt that with your continued support we can help ensure that school is a safe place for all our children and young people to continue their education.

Together we can fight this virus. Together we can ensure the risk of COVID-19 is minimised and we can continue to support our children's education and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely



DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

DON'T SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY HAVE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS.

VISIT [NIDIRECT.GOV.UK/](https://nidirect.gov.uk/) CORONAVIRUS TO BOOK A TEST ONLINE. CALL 119 IF YOU CANNOT BOOK A TEST ONLINE.

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.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO IF:

YOUR CHILD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Book a COVID-19 test
- Household self-isolates
- Inform school immediately about test result

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school if the test is negative providing they are well enough, have not had a fever for 48 hours and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the PHA Contact Tracing Service.

YOUR CHILD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Inform school immediately about test result
- Self-isolate for at least 10 days as advised by the PHA.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school after 10 days even if they still have a cough / loss of smell or taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks.

SOMEBODY IN MY HOUSEHOLD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- The household member should book a COVID-19 test
- Household self-isolates
- Inform school immediately about test result

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school if the symptomatic household member's test is negative and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the PHA Contact Tracing Service.

SOMEBODY IN MY HOUSEHOLD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Inform school immediately about test result

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school when they have completed 14 days of self-isolation without any symptoms*.

CONTACT TRACING HAS IDENTIFIED MY CHILD AS A CLOSE CONTACT

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Self-isolate for at least 14 days as advised by the PHA Contact Tracing Service

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school when they have completed 14 days of self-isolation without any symptoms*.

YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT

WHAT TO DO?

- Attend school as normal
- If your child does not have any COVID-19 symptoms they should carry on with normal activities.

YOUR CHILD HAS TRAVELLED ABROAD AND HAS TO SELF-ISOLATE

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Self-isolate for 14 days in line with quarantine advice

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school when they have completed 14 days of self-isolation without any symptoms*.

*If your child has been identified as a close contact of a case of COVID-19, or has returned from travel abroad and is self-isolating, they must self-isolate for 14 days regardless of a negative COVID-19 test result.

Further information, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for Parents and Carers, can be found on the Department of Education's website at www.education-ni.gov.uk

EDUCATION RESTART