



# Ballykeel Primary School & Nursery Unit

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7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING SOCIAL MEDIA

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a rule, I have never responded to anything that has been drawn to my attention on social media in relation to the school. I appreciate that the majority of parents neither contribute, nor pay attention to idle gossip on these platforms, and have a large degree of confidence in the school. However, given the current crisis, and what I have been reading, I am going to break my rule on this one occasion to support the efforts of school and the staff.

The staff and I have worked tirelessly from the start of this pandemic in March to do our very best for the children, while trying to reduce the risk for everyone. When many schools closed, we provided supervision **every day**, including over the Easter break, to accommodate key worker children.

When our children returned in August, we did our best to ensure that, taking health and safety into account, and the enhanced cleaning required every day, that from day one we would organise it so that the children would have the maximum time in school possible. Many schools continue to send P.5 to P.7 children home from 2:00 onwards, or close at 2:00 every day. Our P.5 to P.7 children have stayed to 3:00 daily.

I am unaware of any schools having after school clubs. We, on the other hand, while keeping children in bubbles, have had clubs for P.2 right through to P.7 with a high number of children attending. The organisation involved in this, including staff to take them, was extensive. Furthermore, in order to get work packs home to children on the 4<sup>th</sup> January half the staff had to come in to work on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> as we have only 2 photocopiers and 14 classes. Staff will be in this Saturday doing the same.

We never shirk from our responsibilities to our children and will consistently go over and above to do our best for them, and to support parents. We have never closed yet because of 'snow' and every member of staff goes to great lengths, including leaving extremely early in the mornings, to make sure they are in school on time for children coming to school.

From the start of this pandemic all of the teachers and assistants have turned up faithfully, every day without fuss or panic. This is despite the fact that they are in close proximity with up to 30 children from different homes every day with only a mere facemask or visor, and nowhere near the level of PPE which the health service has, or even screens like many shops have. I am incredibly grateful for a staff who, despite fear and uncertainty, are continuing to come to work faithfully each day and go the extra mile for our children.

COVID is spreading rapidly through our communities. Everyone has been instructed to stay at home if possible. All we ask is, that if you are at home, and not working, and you are providing a safe and caring environment for your child, that you minimise risk by keeping your child with you, or with someone from your bubble. This should not be interpreted as not wanting children to be in school, rather it is about the health and safety of everyone. We have an extremely high number of children coming in to school next week whose parents have no other safe alternatives, and we are delighted to help.

The staff appreciate the support of parents who are responding appropriately to the seriousness of this situation and are appreciative of what this school does, and will continue to do, for every child.

I hope that you all continue to take care and keep safe.

Yours sincerely,

**Principal:** Mrs S. Sheeran, B.Ed.(Hons), P.G.Dip.Ed, M.Ed.

