

TILDARG PRIMARY SCHOOL



6 Tildarg Road, Ballyclare, Co. Antrim, BT39 9JU

Principal: Mrs K.S. Dickson B.Ed Hons, P.Q.H

1st July 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian,

The past few months have been very difficult for us all and I want to thank you for your support and understanding during lockdown. We have all had to adapt to a new way of working and learning and we commend you for the work you have done with your child/ren.

Lockdown came upon us very quickly and staff and parents had to adapt quickly and plan how best to enable learning to continue during this period. We appreciate that every home is very different and each household experience of lockdown is likely to be quite unique. The printed packs were distributed to help with ongoing learning; and teachers were available via email to provide help and guidance when required. I want to say a huge thank you to the staff who worked so hard in planning and producing these packs, who supported families from home, who continued training and working from home, and who provided supervision for our pupils of key worker parents in our hub school. As a staff and large family we have pulled together, staff, parents and BOG, to continue to do our best for the boys and girls in Tildarg.

As already mentioned in previous correspondence, we will be collecting in these packs on our return to school, which will hopefully be 24th August, for all classes. These packs should be returned in a plastic bag, and will be kept in a box until it is safe to check through these. The purpose of returning packs is to assess what revision / refresher teaching will need to be carried out. If there is a specific topic or area of learning that your child found difficult please feel free, if you have not done so already, to make a note of this and place it at the front of the pack. We understand and appreciate that there may be certain parts of the pack not completed, and there will be various reasons, which are out of your control, for this. This pack was produced as an aid to help you continue your child's learning and we appreciate all the work you have done and we know you have done your best under very difficult circumstances.

Regarding moving forward into the new academic year, I have been reading guidance from the Government and the EA, I have attended meetings with various organisations linked to education, I have had discussions with other local schools and with the staff at Tildarg to plan our next steps. As I am sure you are aware, the guidance is changing quite frequently and just recently changed from 2m to 1m, and may change again before our return. There are many factors that remain unclear and I have asked for clarification of these issues. In the meantime, contingency plans are being drawn up together with staff, linked with current guidance, which can be modified where required when/if this guidance should change.

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RESTART PLANS

Supervision for children of key worker parents was provided until the end of June. The Government is working on plans to offer child care support / assistance over the summer period, as well as support for FSM (Free School Meals). They will provide updates on what support is available, via their website, the news and social media.

As part of our current plan staff will be returning to school on 17th August. Specific arrangements and restart plans will be drawn up, in line with Government guidance and classrooms will be set up, taking account of social distancing guidance. No pupils will be in school during this week.

We are currently hoping to have **all pupils starting on Monday 24th August 2020**. We are unsure which room each class will be in, as it will depend on social distancing guidelines. However, we can inform you of our class set up for the next academic year:

P1 and P2 – with Mrs C. McClay

P3 and P4 – with Miss E. McCullough

P5 and P6 – with Miss J. Wright

P7 - with Mrs K. Dickson & Principal Cover

We are unsure how long the school day will be at this stage, as this will depend on what regulations the Government have in place at restart.

No guidance has been shared with us regarding 'Home to School Transport' or 'School Meal Provision'. I will pass this on when I receive it.

Please note: **We will be closed on Monday 31st August** as this is a harmonised holiday. As the pupils will be starting 2 days earlier than planned, we will be taking 2 days' holiday at another time in the year. This is yet to be confirmed, but is likely to be taken in the third term.

If there are any general updates I will do my best to share these on our school website and possibly via the School's NI App (either publicly or privately), Twitter and Facebook. School plans will be drawn up closer to restart, taking account of Government guidance at that time. These will then be shared with you in preparation for return to school.

I would appreciate it if you could contact the class teacher via email, from 17th August onwards, if your child has had a particularly difficult experience during lockdown that you think we should be made aware of.

We look forward to having the boys and girls back in school again. It will be good for all of us to be back together and for face-to-face teaching and learning to resume. We hope you enjoy the summer break, take care and stay safe.

Mrs K. Dickson (Principal)