



# The Wee Friday Note

## Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021



**Who's phoning me on 028 95 36 88 88 ?**

***This number belongs to the PHA (N.I.) - Save this number to your phone so you know to answer the call !***

- 1. Squid Game and other media issues** – having spent the last 22 years at Cregagh Primary, when I see or hear something that has the potential to damage our school children, I don't hide my concerns from the wider Cregagh community. It's nice to be popular but I'd rather take a stand for protecting children and their childhoods. I have been concerned for a long time about the 'free' access many of our pupils have to the internet (through computers, mobile phones and game consoles) and televisions that have Sky, Apple TV, Netflix and Prime on them. Many of our pupils have unfiltered access to these things 24/7 and I can say with certainty that these things are making many of our pupils totally miserable, depressed, dissatisfied with who they are and totally confused. We have pupils regularly watching and listening to material (and playing computer games) that is not suitable. This is not only a moral judgment on my part, but I am also seeing the negative impact this is having on our children's mental, emotional and physical health: all of which are as important to me and my school as the children's academic progress.

As a school, we are having to deal with increasing numbers of children viewing pornography; watching videos about body image/extreme dieting; videos of dog-fighting; videos of bare knuckle fighting; people committing suicide online; using social media to face-time grown adult men who are total strangers; videos encouraging self-harm; videos about contraceptives and videos talking about gender-issues that young primary school aged children are too immature to process and not be unduly influenced by them. This list is a mere selection of examples that I have had to deal with in school over the past year or so, myself.

Children (as young as 6!) watching Squid Game is just one more example. Squid Game may be based around classic children's games but that doesn't mean it's suitable for kids. As anyone who has seen it can tell you, it's not exactly like anything else you might see on children's TV. Despite that, its huge popularity has filtered down to the playground. Parents should not let pupils watch it if they are younger than the recommended 15 age rating. The show, and its violent and gruesome scenes, is not suitable viewing for youngsters. It depicts sex scenes, nudity, extreme violence, self-harm, suicide and bad language.

- The advice external bodies would give would not be any different to advice we would give about any other TV or film not suitable for children.
- If they are not of the age to meet the certification, then they shouldn't really be watching that series/film.
- Control what content your children can watch: be their filter!
- Setting up a Netflix Kids experience profile means that children only have access to TV shows and movies which have been carefully selected for kids. The look and feel of the app is simpler and children can't access any account settings.

About mobile phones: nearly all complaints of children feeling victimised, put-down, being unkindly compared with others involve mobile phones. They are the curse of schools! Parents, if you let your child play on the roads, they will eventually get knocked down! So it is with mobile phones. If your child's mobile phone brings more sadness into their lives than happiness, take them away!

The most poorly attended meetings we organise for parents are those that deal with children and technology. The next time they run (every single year including during lockdowns), seriously consider getting involved. You will be made to feel very welcome. We are all in this together!

- 2. BREAKFAST CLUB** – our breakfast club has restarted although we are keeping numbers low at present so we have room to space children out. It starts at 8:15am and runs until 8:45am, after which those attending will go straight to class. It costs £1 per child per day. Parents must use our *ParentMoney* App to pre-book and pre-pay their children into breakfast club before 12 noon on Fridays for the following week.

There's a wide choice of foodstuffs for children to enjoy: fruit juices, selection of cereals, porridge, toast and a selection of spreads. There's a nice atmosphere and cartoons are often played on the big screen for the children to enjoy. Book and pay on **edsp.co/sm-login** with your registered password for **SchoolMoney/Teachers2Parents** OR if new to **SchoolMoney** use #password

### 3. END OF £20 UNIVERSAL CREDIT BOOST (COVID) & ENTITLEMENT TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The recent change to the level of Universal Credit provided may mean that some families previously not eligible to receive FSM are now eligible. Worth double-checking: <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants/apply-for-free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

4. **HEALTHY BREAKS, NO NUTS & WATER ONLY** – please remember to send only healthy breaks Monday-Thursday with your children. On Fridays, children can bring a sweet treat, piece of cake or regular crisps as an end of week treat. Only water is allowed to be brought for break and packed lunches (and that is for every day). Lastly, please remember we are a 'nut free' school due to some children and staff having allergies.

5. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY (CAKES)** – every week in school, we announce and celebrate pupils' birthdays. Parents sometimes want to send birthday cakes into school for children to enjoy. This is very kind and well-intentioned. However, cutting a cake and distributing it to 25 children in a classroom setting in which some children have allergies is problematic. So, if a child has a birthday and parents want to send her/his classmates a treat, this can only be done on Fridays. It needs to be something individually wrapped. It cannot contain nuts as an ingredient. Fun-size bars or individually wrapped cake bars/biscuits are ideal ...but no birthday cakes please (they won't be used). Thank you.

6. **'Normal' childhood sickness** – now that we are approaching the autumn/winter, we can all expect to see the usual coughs, colds, runny noses, etc. These conditions, along with bouts of vomiting or diarrhoea, cannot be ignored just because they are not Covid. If a child vomits or experiences a bout of diarrhoea, they must stay out of school for 48 hours (2 full days) according to HSC/PSA for schools. None of us would choose for our children to miss any days at school but remember to follow the better safe than sorry rule: *"If in doubt, keep them out and observe for 48 hours"*.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Week beginning Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>Parent-Teacher Consultations</b> (via phone or Zoom). Early 1pm finish for P1-7 Monday to Friday*. Dinners & lunches as normal.
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October	last day of first half-term. <b>1pm finish time</b> .*
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> -Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> October	Halloween holiday (5 school days inclusive).
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> November	back to school for start of second half-term.
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December	last day of first <u>full</u> term. 12noon finish. No dinners/lunches
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December- Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2022	Christmas holidays (10 school days inclusive)
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2022	New spring term begins

### **\*\*ADVANCE NOTICE\*\***

As highlighted on our school holiday calendar, NI school children will get an extra day's holiday in 2022 for HRM the Queen's Jubilee. To balance our school calendar, Cregagh PS will be closed one additional day on Friday 18th March 2022. This will mean, CPS pupils will be off school Thursday 17th March (St. Patrick's Day) and the following day, Friday 18th March.