



The (not so) Wee Friday Note

Friday 14th May 2021



"Life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent of how I react to it."

Charles Swindoll

- Sports Days 2021** - no, that's not a spelling mistake: we are planning to have more than one Sports Day due to ongoing Covid restriction in schools. On Wednesday of this week the Department of Education wrote to schools to reinforce the ongoing importance of class bubbles in stopping the transmission of Covid among young people, who in turn may bring it home with them. This means we will be organising several Sports Day mornings for our different year groups. We will still have all our normal sports events and races etc. but we have to do it in smaller group numbers. We can't have the whole school and all parents present at the same time ☹️
Parents of children involved will be able to attend but will have to agree to observe social distancing and/or wear a mask. P5, P6 & P7 Sports Day: Monday 21st June; P1 & P2 Sports Day: Tuesday 22nd June; P3 & P4 Sports Day Wednesday 23rd June. Exact times and details will be sent home closer to the time. All events will take place before lunchtime.
- Coronavirus update** – earlier this week, I shared with parents the news that a few local primary schools had had to send whole year groups home to isolate/get tested. This was not the fault of the schools affected but it reminds us that Covid is still out there doing the rounds. Drop-off and pick-up times, events such as Sports Day, children mixing in large groups at the local bonfire site are all examples of times/places that represent potential threats.
- What can you hold in your hand, connects you with the whole world and can make you cry?** The answer is: *a mobile phone*. School understands that it is up to individual parents whether their children have mobile phones or not. However, because it is parents' choice, it is up to parents to supervise their children's use of mobile phones. It is not school's responsibility. We do teach the children about bullying (including cyber-bullying) and internet safety but this is a parenting issue. If a parent chooses to give a mobile phone to their child, they must understand that they are giving a HUGE amount of responsibility (and temptation) directly into the hands of their young son or daughter. School does not arm children with mobile phones, parents do.

Some of the issues Cregagh Primary School has had to address because of mobile phone misuse include: WhatsApp groups used to bully other children; children as young as 6 viewing pornography, slasher horror movies, 'online suicides'; sharing of highly inappropriate pictures of themselves with others; online gambling using parents' debit card details; children watching 'Self-Harm' videos on YouTube; children watching videos of dog-fighting; children playing 18+ violent video games on phones; children Googling questions such as "Am I Trans?", "How can I look older?", "Where can I get drugs?"; children registering on adult Dating Sites; children using the internet to search for derogative words and phrases: including sectarian, racist and highly sexualised terms. Parents should also know that children often search the internet for ideas, advice and Apps that actually cover-up/hide/delete their recent phone activity.

I should also add, that the poorest attended courses we have run for parents have been about internet and mobile phone safety. Last month, a free evening online course for parents of older pupils called *Face-to-Facebook*, which was all about protecting your children online and knowing what they're using their mobile phones for, was attended by 1 parent. The previous time this course was run in our school, I also invited Euston Street PS parents along ... 2 parents attended: and both were from Euston Street PS!

Here are some questions all parents can ask themselves regularly about children's mobile phone use:

- "How do I know** what my child is sending to others and looking at on their mobile phones?"

- b) “**How often do I** sit down with my child and check through their phone activity?”
- c) “**How do I know** my child isn’t ‘cleaning’ their activity from off their phone before I see it?”
- d) “Is **my** child asking the internet for answers to important life-questions instead of me?”
- e) “**Do I know** my child’s username and passwords for all his/her online accounts?”
- f) “How much **time** is my child spending on their phone and where is their phone when my child is meant to be sleeping – who has it?”
- g) “Would I give my child free-reign with my debit card or credit card without any adult supervision?”

In summary, mobile phones were designed to be used by adults; not children. Modern phones have cameras, access to the world wide web and all kinds of games and Apps: some nice, some not. Very few children have the maturity and self-discipline to use mobile phones responsibly. Mobile phones can be useful for older children (especially when they go to secondary school) but they are not necessary for young children. It is not a child’s ‘human right’ to have a mobile phone. Below is a contract that one mum recently made with her 12-year-old son and shared it with an international magazine. There may be some useful ideas worth sharing! ☺

As we promised once you finished primary school you would be lent a phone.
The rules are to be applied to this phone and signed by all parties.

A phone is a responsibility you have to earn to be able to use.
This phone belongs to us and you’re borrowing it. You own the number and the data.
By agreeing to these terms and conditions you understand at any point you can and will have this phone removed from your hands and reassessment may be done regarding the rules and conditions.

- 1- You acknowledge that if phone is broken or lost, you are to replace it or fix at your own cost. We have taken the responsibility to provide you with top of the range screen protector and cover. At any time, this is removed and phone is broken you are to replace the entire phone. Covers are to remain insitu
- 2- Always answer your parent’s calls. If you can’t answer message us, call us when you can. If no contact is made, then we look for you.
- 3- Data – Once you go over your data you don’t get any extra until your next top up. 30 days its due. I’ve supplied the app where you can see how much data you have left and days. To buy more credit you need to complete your jobs. Credit won’t be given when not earned. Use it wisely.
- 4- No mobile phones in rooms.
- 5- Mobile phone is to be given to parent before you go to bed – at both houses.
- 6- Screen times apply. No messaging before 7.30am, some people actually sleep in – strange huh?!
- 7- Follow the school’s rules and policies for mobile phones.
- 8- Do NOT take photos, movies of people who aren’t aware. This includes strangers. Especially if someone asks you not to take image.
- 9- Do NOT upload anything on social media that you wouldn’t like being uploaded about yourself or your sisters. Or you wouldn’t want your mother or grandmother to see.
- 10- Don’t troll people on social media, if you can’t say it to their face don’t write it – INSTANT SOCIAL MEDIA REMOVED.
- 11- Passwords and account names – Accessible at all times, regardless if you think differently. You change the password and we don’t – ITS GONE.
- 12- If you delete and purposefully hide things on your phone, social media or emails, you’ll lose your accounts.
- 13- Remember what you write or say. Writing something can come across completely different to what someone may have meant.
- 14- What you post on social media is forever. It’s there for everyone.
- 15- If you are being bullied – show us. Don’t hide it.
- 16- Understand your sim card and use of our phone is a huge privilege. It’s not something you need, so it’s not a right.
- 17- Any violence, issues that cause us to lose trust in you will result in banned phone.








There will be a strike system. If its bold it’s no strike you’re out. Otherwise three strike system.

This contract will be amended once child reaches 15 years old.

Our school website has an excellent Parents' Section:
<https://www.cregaghprimary.org.uk/parents/e-safety-help-and-support/> that contains lots of easy to read, easy to follow steps and advice to help you keep your child safe from mobile phone and internet harm.

4. **Changes to school staffing** – we are looking forward to the return of both Mrs Standley (P2) and Mrs Butt (P3) on Monday 7th June. Both teachers are returning from maternity leave. Of course, their return will mean that Mrs McGarrigle (P2) and Mrs Woods (P3) will be finishing with us on Friday 4th June. I want to thank both Mrs McGarrigle and Mrs Woods for all their hard work – especially during a very difficult Covid year. Both Mrs McGarrigle and Mrs Woods have been excellent members of our staff team since the end of August and we wish them every blessing and success for the future.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

-  Monday 31st May - **school closed** for late spring Bank Holiday
-  Tuesday 1st June - **school closed** for School Development Day (as per school calendar 2020/21)
-  Week beginning Monday 7th June – **school closes at 1pm** Monday-Friday for Parent-Teacher
-  Telephone consultations (times for telephone calls will be arranged beforehand)
-  Thursday 24th June – likely date of P7 Final Assembly & Prize Day (restrictions permitting)
-  Friday 25th June – P7's last day at Cregagh Primary School
-  Wednesday 30th June – uniform-free day. School closes at 12noon. No dinners or packed lunches.