



The Wee Friday Note

Friday 14th January 2022



"If one dream should fall and break into a thousand pieces, never be afraid to pick one of those pieces up and begin again." ~ Flavia Weedn

Dear Parents,

We've had a busy but enjoyable week in school. Three school staff and a good number of pupils have been off this week for Covid-related reasons. We have come close on one or two occasions over the past week to having to shut a class down.

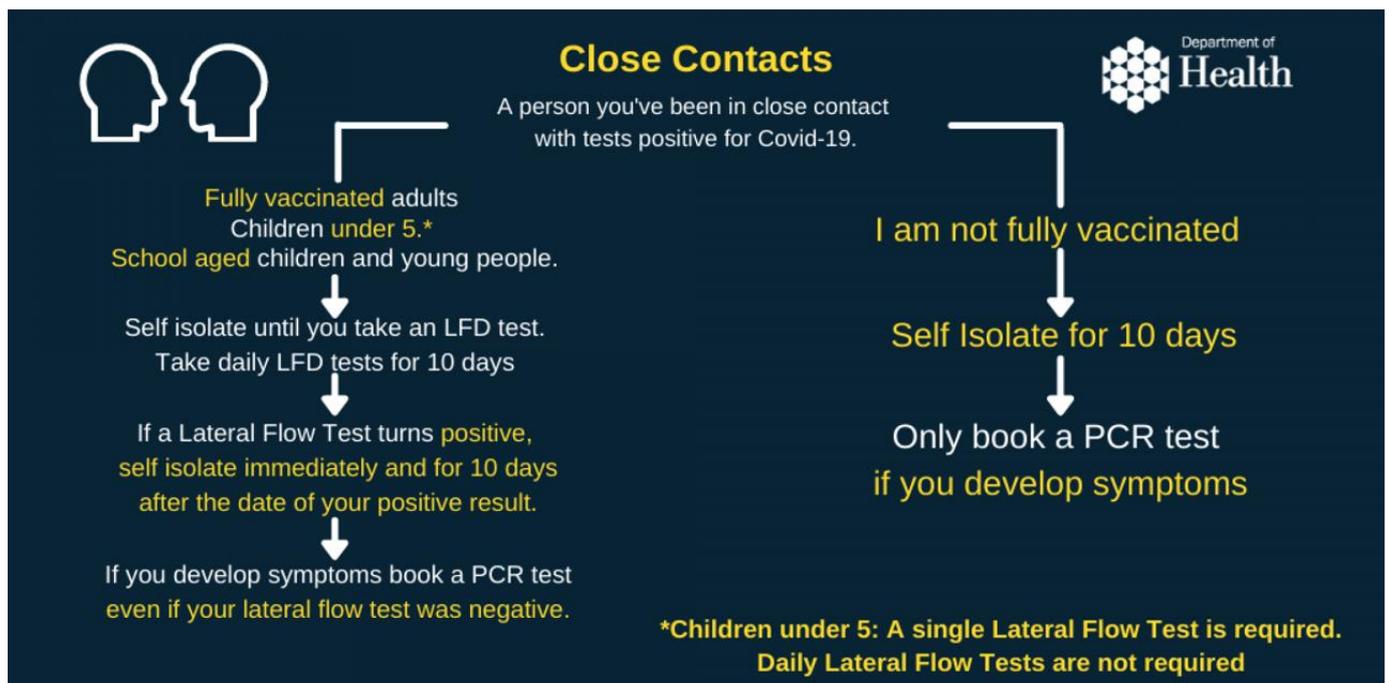
I want to thank all parents for being supportive of school's measures to try and keep everybody safe and well. School staff look forward along with parents to the end of all of these mitigations and measures and long for a return to 'normal'.

Remember those days? They will return eventually! In the meantime, let's stay vigilant and keep Covid out of school and keep our school open.

1. COVID

There have been a few changes to the management of Covid in NI over recent days. Most of these changes are to do with changes to testing.

- ❖ A PCR is no longer required to confirm a positive Lateral Flow Test (LFT).
- ❖ PCR tests should still be booked and taken if someone has Covid symptoms.
- ❖ LFT tests are therefore to be used by children and adults who aren't showing any symptoms but think they may have Covid: in other words, Close Contacts or people who need to check on a daily/regular basis that they are Covid-free.



- ❖ Children who are sick with anything should not be sent to school. This is especially important right now as the Omicron variant of Covid is even more contagious than previous variants. So, the golden rule of "If in doubt, keep them out" is even more important than ever.

❖ Therefore, I am strongly encouraging parents to keep children off school if they display **any** of the following 5 possible symptoms:

- Raised temperature above 37.8oC
- A persistent cough
- Loss of sense of taste or smell

Add to this list two additional symptoms common with Omicron:

- Runny nose
- Headache

- ❖ If your child has any of these 5 symptoms, you should still try and book a PCR test for them - because they have possible symptoms.
- ❖ Until the worst of Omicron's impact has passed, parents need to help schools stay open by keeping potentially sick kids off; getting them tested when & how appropriately; and keep communicating with school about what's going on with their children.
- ❖ ***I am continuing to ask parents to keep children off school when someone in the family home tests positive with Covid. With Omicron being so contagious, it is very likely infection will spread to others living in the same house including children. I believe parents helping us with this is one of the reasons Cregagh Primary has done so well during the pandemic compared with many of our neighbouring schools. I understand this is an awful inconvenience where it happens but I am trying to keep classes/school open for the largest number of children at any given time. Thank you.***

2. Staying warm while at school

Primary schools have very few mitigations at their disposal to help fight against Covid. One of the most important mitigations is to keep classrooms well ventilated by keeping their windows open – even though it's January. School's underfloor heating is on but it is still cooler than normal in classes for children and staff. Therefore, please make sure your children have enough layers of clothing on to keep themselves warm. A vest, a t-shirt worn under school polo shirts can make a real difference. Children may also wear a fleece or similar top over their school sweater if needed.

3. Electric scooters

Electric scooters are not permitted in school. Although great fun, it is not legal to ride electric scooters on either public footpaths or roads. Ordinary scooters: no problem! 😊

4. School grounds development

Parents will see a lot of activity in and around our school site over the next few months as the contractors begin to build the new Family Resource Hub building. The construction site will be carefully managed by the contractors but parents and children must still be careful when walking past cordons and fences for debris such as small stones and slippy mud. We will also start developing our new gardening and outdoor play areas very soon. Exciting times to be at Cregagh Primary School!

5. After-school clubs

Obviously we are very restricted with what we can do by way of after-school clubs. We had reintroduced football after Halloween. However, we feel that due to the freezing cold January weather, the need to keep any mixing of classes outside it is wisest to postpone restarting football until after January; when hopefully the worst of Omicron will have passed. We look forward to restarting our full programme of co-curricular activities as soon as it is reasonably safe to do so: this will include things such as enlarging our Breakfast Club, Choir, Eco Club, Two2Three Waiting Club for P1s & P2s, hockey, Coding/Computer Club and more.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 14 th to Friday 18 th February	Half-term holiday (5 school days)
Thursday 17 th March	St. Patrick's Day. School closed
Friday 18 th March	School holiday (1 school day)
Friday 8 th April	Spring Term ends. School closes at 12 noon
Monday 11 th April to Friday 22 nd April	Easter holiday (10 school days)
Monday 25 th April	Summer term begins

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