



The Wee Friday Note

Friday 4th February 2022



“If you want rainbows, you need to put up with the rain” - Dolly Parton

1. SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS 2022/23

Applications for Post-Primary places **opens** 1st February and **closes** 23rd February 2022.

2. COVID Update

Thankfully, we saw a slight decrease in the numbers of positive cases among pupils from Wednesday of this week onwards. Numbers are still high. Thank you to parents for continuing to be vigilant, test children when necessary & keep children off when necessary. *The Belfast Telegraph* reported this week that COVID cases in NI primary schools rose steeply throughout January. Last week, Public Health Agency (PHA) statistics revealed that virtually every post-primary school in Northern Ireland reported an outbreak of Covid-19 during January. However, since the start of the new school term, almost double the number of new positive cases were reported in primary schools than in post primary.

Isolation – is it Day 5 or Day 6?

This has been a frequent question: “Is the day someone tests positive ‘Day Zero’ or ‘Day One’ of self-isolation?” Day One is the first full day of isolation. Therefore, Day Zero is the day you get tested or begin to show symptoms. So there must be 5 full 24 hour days completed in isolation before any possibility of leaving self-isolation.

📌 This means that a person who tests positive **can leave isolation after midnight on day 5** having tested NEGATIVE on day 4 and day 5. A person must continue to self-isolate until they get two back-to-back NEGATIVE tests. **Pupils return to school the day after their second NEGATIVE lateral flow test** (confirmed by PHA 20/1/2022 and again by PHA/EA 27/1/2020).

📌 Remember, 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. There are flus & bad colds going around too at the moment.

📌 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 the following additional symptoms often associated with Omicron & reported by many of our parents:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite

📌 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.

3. STAYING WARM WHILE AT SCHOOL

Please remember that although school's underfloor heating is on it is still cooler than normal in classes for children and staff due to our having to keep our windows open for ventilation. 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. No child needs to feel cold.

4. BICYCLES & SCOOTERS

We are keen to see more children cycle or scoot to school (P4-7 only unless accompanied by parent). We look forward to having designated cycle and bike parking spaces as part of our development of outdoor space. In the meantime, bicycles and scooters can be parked at the side of the school building. Electric scooters are not permitted in school.

5. SCHOOLS RULES

Just a reminder of some of our basic school rules:

- No **jewellery** other than a watch (not a 'smart watch') & plain stud earrings may be worn
- We are a 'Nut Free School' meaning children & staff are not allowed to bring foods into school that contain **nuts** as a listed ingredient
- **Swearing** is not permitted in our school (this includes words & phrases such as "Oh my God" and "Jesus Christ")
- Pupils are not permitted to bring **mobile phones** to school
- [Adults] **Smoking & vaping** is not allowed at the school gates or anywhere on the school campus
- [Adults] **Parents** should not walk their **dogs** to school or wait at the school gates with dogs (some pupils are afraid of dogs)

6. SCHOOL FUND

It would be very much appreciated if any outstanding School Fund could be paid as soon as possible – either in full or in instalments. £20 per family per school year.

Thank you so much!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| 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 |