

St. Joseph's Primary School

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Principal: Mr Gary Trainor BEd (Hons) PQH NI

15th December 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

As this calendar year soon draws to a close, I wish to pay tribute to our whole school community for their unwavering support, cooperation, resilience, and patience throughout Term one. Once again we are faced with an unpredictable and uncertain period in all our lives due to the new Omicron variant gathering swift momentum and the impact it may have.

Everything we have achieved in school thus far is due in no small part to the commitment, care and dedication of our entire St. Joseph's staff who have demonstrated this continuously through often difficult and extenuating circumstances with great determination and vigour. Be assured, your children could not be in any better hands than they are at St. Joseph's, Meigh.

Due to the heightened risk of Omicron and the speed of its transmission, coupled with having to isolate over Christmas and not being able to spend time with family members should they test positive or be a close contact of someone who is, a number of parents have indicated Friday 17th December will be their child's last day of attendance in school. If this is a course of action you are considering, please contact the office and notify them of your intention so they can apply a special Covid code that does not affect your child's school attendance.

I also wish to inform you that as a direct result of the covid pandemic, there are unprecedented pressures on both teaching and non-teaching staff within schools across the entire education system in Northern Ireland.

As a result, there is a significant shortage of available substitute teachers across all sectors and many schools are finding that obtaining substitute teachers has become impossible.

Schools cannot replace absent teachers with classroom assistants.

St. Joseph's P.S., Meigh has a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of all pupils and staff. As such, if safe levels of staffing cannot be maintained, classes must be closed and St. Joseph's will have no option other than to temporarily resort to remote learning, if possible, for affected children.

Of course, we sincerely hope that this will not happen. A decision to close a class or indeed the whole school is not one any Principal or Board of Governors takes lightly. However, St. Joseph's will need your support and understanding should we find ourselves in this position.

At a Board of Governor meeting last night, it was decided that the last day of term for pupils in school will now be **Tuesday 21st DECEMBER** at 2 pm for all pupils. This will allow our staff and cleaning team time to complete a deep clean of all rooms, resources and furniture.

P.T.O

On Friday 17th, pupils may bring in a small treat and drink (*no tins/bottles*) for class Christmas parties. Please be reminded we are a nut free school.

Reminder, last day for Breakfast Club and After School Wraparound Care is Friday 17th December.

Finally, on behalf of our Governors and entire staff, I wish you all a safe, happy and restful Christmas time with your family and a Happy New Year. God bless and take care.

Yours sincerely

G. Trainor

Principal

