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02.02.21

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Further to the letter dated 28th of January you will now all be aware that the Welsh Assembly government announced last Friday the plans to re-open schools after half term **if the covid cases continue to fall and it is safe to do so**. Initially the plans are to reopen for the youngest learners (Foundation Phase). We are yet to receive guidance regarding the practicalities of this. We appreciate that families will need prior warning of these arrangements in order that you can make the necessary arrangements with regards child care due to work commitments etc therefore once we receive the operational guidance and update our arrangements we will notify you as soon as possible.

However, at this stage we can confirm that **during the February Half Term Break (Feb 15th – 19th) there will be no in school provision for the children of keyworkers and vulnerable families**. Also there won't be any remote learning tasks online set for the week as it is a School Holiday for the children. **However**, I am delighted to inform you that our **brand new Holiday Care Club in partnership with Newry@SantesFair will be open**. Details for this fantastic new offer can be found on the flyer below.

In the meantime, due to spaces in our care hub are very limited I would also like to share with you the following message from the Local Education Authority:

*"On Friday the First Minister, Mark Drakeford, announced that level four ("stay at home") lockdown restrictions must continue for the next three weeks to allow the NHS to recover. The restrictions were introduced to prevent the new, highly-infectious strain of the virus spreading from person to person. Earlier in January the First Minister stated: "The alert level four restrictions we introduced before Christmas must remain in place to keep us all safe. To slow the spread of the virus, we all must stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives." This new strain adds a new and unwelcome dimension to the pandemic. **The First Minister added: "Wherever there's mixing; wherever people come together, the new strain is spreading – it is highly transmissible and spreads very quickly from person to person."***

*While the situation in Wales is improving, cases of coronavirus are still too high and the NHS continues to be under intense pressure. The First Minister added today that "We need to keep the lockdown restrictions in place for a little while longer to help us bring rates of the virus down further. If we can do this, we will create the headroom we need to get children back to school after half term – starting with the youngest at primary schools." **The return to primary school will be planned in a phased and flexible way from 22 February, if the public health situation continues to improve.** The First Minister also stated: "If there is sufficient headroom, we will bring back small numbers of secondary and college learners at the same time." In the meantime, students will continue to learn online. **However, schools remain open on a limited basis for children of critical workers and vulnerable learners.***

*It is vital we ensure Welsh Government guidance on who can attend is followed. **Being included on the critical worker list does not mean children of all workers in these categories can or will be able to continue to send their children to school.** Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. On Thursday 28.1.21 the Minister for Education stated **"If one parent is a critical worker, they should be able to access a school or childcare place. Where one parent is a critical worker and the other parent is not, then the other parent should provide safe alternative arrangements at home when possible."** Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be. **If any parent is having difficulties with their child's remote learning, we recommend they get in touch with the school."** (Link to Critical workers list <https://gov.wales/identifying-children-critical-workers-guidance>)*

I will update you as soon as we have updated our arrangements in line with the operational guidance.

Stay Safe!

Mr Richard Jones
Headteacher

★ HOLIDAY CLUB ★ Half Term

(8th -12 February)

We have a Fantastic timetable ready for Holiday club. We please ask that all places are booked in advance as we have limited availability!!

Our sessions are as follows:

Morning Session (8:30-1pm) £18.00

Afternoon Session (1pm-5:30pm) £18.00

Full Day Session (8:30am-5:30pm) £32.00

These sessions include breakfast, snack & a light tea, packed lunch will need to be provided & children must be of full-time school age

For more information, please contact (01407) 764716

Holiday Club



Newry Juniors
@ St Mary's

