



Carniny Primary School



Principal: Mrs V Wylie BEd, NPQH
Vice-Principal: Mr I Somerville BEd, NPQH
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Dear Parent/Guardian

20th March 2020

At approximately 5pm yesterday evening (Thursday 19th March), the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, Peter Weir MLA, made a statement outlining how schools will close from the end of the school day today (Friday 20th March). He also outlined that schools will be asked to open with skeleton staff from Monday 23rd March to support identified Key Workers. However, with the lack of clarity and without a detailed operational plan from the Department of Education, we will be planning for the provision on Monday 23rd March. It is our hope that we will be in a safe position to offer provision to support identified Key Workers from **Tuesday 24th March (8.45am – 2pm/3pm)**.

The most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. **If children can stay safely at home, they should do so, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.**

Every alternative childcare arrangement should be explored before deciding to send children to school. School should, in effect, be a **LAST RESORT**. This is in order to comply with general public health advice on social distancing.

Schools will be providing a very different type of provision; essentially childcare, as opposed to teaching and learning. It will be the remit of the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team to prioritise places.

Before contacting school, **please pay particular attention to the following points:**

- A list of Key Workers, issued by the Department of Education is listed below. Priority will be given to children with **BOTH** parents working as Key Workers, and **both parents out at work at the same time**.
- In single parent families, the individual parent **MUST** be a Key Worker.
- If possible, alternative childcare arrangements should be sought before deciding to send your child to school. For example, with other family members, friends etc. Please try and use schools as a last resort. This is to try and limit the number of children and adults together in a small space in line with recent social distancing guidance.
- We will not have wraparound services available. Normal opening and closing times will apply (8:45am – 2pm/3pm). Children should not be dropped off before 8.45am and should be collected promptly at 2pm/3pm.
- Children attending will be required to wear their school uniform and follow the normal school rules and routines.



- We have received no information regarding school meals. Please ensure your child brings a packed lunch (including something for break).
- Please be advised that we will be performing childcare duties, rather than teaching.
- Teachers will be fully engaged in planning and uploading resources to our Home Learning portal. This childcare provision will be staffed predominantly by classroom assistants.
- Provision of this service will be dependent on staff availability; provision may have to end if this becomes a problem.
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their children arrive fully equipped to engage in the activities provided on the Home Learning portal or in the Home Learning packs. This will require the parents to visit the portal each evening and provide **all** relevant resources (exercise books, worksheets etc.).

If you are an identified Key Worker, who wishes to avail of this childcare provision, please make contact with our school office via telephone (02825643814) **by 12 noon Monday 23rd March**. If you have already contacted the office to enquire about provision, we would ask you to re-evaluate your need in light of the points above and contact the school office again on Monday. It would be helpful if you could inform the school office of the days/hours you will require this provision. Please note, we will only be able to offer limited places. You will receive notification on Monday afternoon if we are able to offer your child(ren) a place.

Remember, if you or a member of your household are displaying the symptoms of COVID 19, however mild, you must self-isolate for 14 days and your child will be unable to use this provision. These symptoms include:

- A high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- A new continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly

The key message is that schools are closed, but here at Carniny we are doing everything we can to support our families, given these unprecedented circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

V. Wylie

Principal



List of Key Workers as outlined on documentation issued to schools on 19th March 2020:

- Health and Social Care. This includes doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, home carers and staff required to maintain our health and social care sector
- Education and childcare. This includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who will remain active during the Covid-19 response
- Public safety and national security. This includes civilians and officers in the police (including key contractors), Fire and Rescue Service, prison service and other national security roles
- Transport. This will include those keeping air, water, road and rail transport modes operating during the Covid-19 response
- Utilities and Communication. This includes staff needed for oil, gas, electricity and water (including sewage) and primary industry supplies, to continue during the Covid-19 response, as well as key staff in telecommunications, post and delivery, services and waste disposal
- Food and other necessary goods. This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution and sale, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (e.g. hygiene, medical etc.)
- Key national and local government including those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the Covid-19 response

