**St Brigid’s PS**

**Castle Street**

**Ballymoney**

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**Principal: Mr Kieran O’Neill**

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**Thursday, 10 December 2020**

**Dear Parents/Guardians**

I think you will all agree that if we go back a year to this time 2019 little did we know what was ahead of us all in 2020. Yet, here we are a year later and coming to the end of what has been the most difficult of years. In all my years of being involved in education I have never known anything like it. The lockdowns, the remote learning, the worry and fear of the virus, social distancing, washing hands and wearing masks are but a few of the things that have taken over this year.

However, regardless of everything, we have managed to keep going. The children have been wonderful in the way that they have adapted to be able to cope with a very different year in their lives. There has been so much upheaval. Sacraments were missed, moved and finally celebrated and the Year 7 leavers moved and settled in to their new schools, sadly without getting to say goodbye.

I have to pay a huge debt of gratitude to all the staff in St Brigid’s PS, who have worked tirelessly to keep the school going and keep everyone safe. We have managed to keep the school open during lockdown for key workers, when required, and were able to re-open successfully in August.

This time last year I wrote to you all wishing you a happy Christmas and hoping for continued great success for the school in 2020. I hope you agree, that even with everything that we have had to deal with this year, we have managed to do it successfully.

This year I do wish you all a happy Christmas and hope that 2021 will bring light at the end of the tunnel with regards to COVID-19 and an easing of restrictions to allow for a return to normality here in St Brigid’s.

We have been building up to Christmas as best we can this year and despite everything there is a buzz of excitement in the air every day. The children are enjoying every moment of all the Christmas activities going on.

**Christmas holiday arrangements:**

Class A and B will finish on Thursday 17 December at the normal time.

Year 1-7 will finish on Friday 18 December at 12noon.

School will re-open on Thursday 7 January.

Whilst the school is open as normal next week, I appreciate that some of you may be thinking about the impact of your child’s bubble having to go into isolation at any stage during the week. This is the reality of the situation and if a bubble does have to go into isolation next week the period will be 14 days that will include isolating over Christmas itself. We have worked hard all term to maintain a safe environment here in school and this will continue next week.

However, I have been contacted by some parents, informing me that they may not send their children to school next week in an attempt to avoid the children having to isolate over Christmas. If you decide not to send your child/children to school next week, please contact the school to inform us of this decision for attendance recording purposes.

Again, on behalf of everyone here in St Brigid’s, could I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy Christmas and hope that you all have a lovely, peaceful time with your family and friends. Thank you for your continued support for the children and the school. We are very proud of the wonderful children we have here at St Brigid’s. Let’s hope that 2021 is an improvement on 2020.

Thank you for your co-operation in everything so far. Take care and keep safe.

Mr O’Neill

Principal