



St. Anne's School
Ballymany Cross
The Curragh
Co. Kildare R56 VH 67
Registered Charity No 20205104
Ph: + 353 45 441 494
Fax: + 353 45 441737
R56 VH67
Email: office@stannesthecarragh.ie

Principal: Pauline Dempsey

Roll No. 19277B

6th January 2022

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I hope you had a lovely Christmas and managed to stay safe, particularly with the increase in positive cases currently being reported. The Staff send you their best wishes for this coming year.

We were delighted to open our school this morning and to greet the children as they arrived. We will continue to take all precautions and to adhere to all guidelines and recommendations to ensure we stay open. This is manageable within our own environment but more difficult in circumstances that occur outside of school.

Although symptoms of the Omicron variant are said to be milder with individuals presenting with less serious illnesses, it is spreading rapidly across all age groups. Since September we have experienced high levels of staff absences as a result of restricted movement, self-isolation and close contact rules. This is on top of the usual non Covid related absences. Today, already, we have seen a significant rise in Covid related absences with 30% of our staff being out.

As you may understand, there may come a time when the safety and well-being of our pupils will have to be considered within these patterns of absences. We will, in these instances, continue to adhere to Department of Education Guidelines and will seek advice at every stage. Should we be in a position whereby we may have to close a class, you will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity. This is not something we would do easily, however it cannot be ruled out. We ask for your co-operation in this should we be in a position whereby we have to notify you of this eventuality. Please do not put your child on the bus if you receive a message that the class is closed.

Hopefully it will not come to that. Meanwhile I am passing on reminders from the HSE.

Infection prevention and Control Measures:

1) Attending school:

Symptoms

- Please be aware and do not send your child to school if s/he has any symptoms of Covid-19 infection. Symptom profiles are available at the following link:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/symptoms/overview/>

- Please take a precautionary approach, particularly when children are less able to articulate their symptoms. If your child appears unwell, observe them at home and contact their GP as appropriate.

We are aware that many parents are anxious about sending their child back to school at this time due to the uncertainty around the spread of the virus. Please let us know if you will be keeping your child at home and if you would like us to send some schoolwork home for them.

Close contacts:

- If your child has been told by the HSE services that they are a close contact of a case of Covid-19, you need to adhere to the advice on the HSE website in relation to restricted movements and testing. Please check the following link for further information:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/contact-tracing/close-contact/>

- According to HSE advice children under 13 years who are household close contacts must restrict their movements for 14 days and we are advised that they are offered PCR testing at day 0 and day 10. On receipt of a day 10 not-detected PCR test result, they may exit restricted movements.
- It is important that anyone who has been identified as a close contact, is very aware of COVID-19 symptoms as above, and isolate and undergo testing should they develop any symptoms.

2) Re-enforcing general public health messages

- In addition to all the above, you are reminded of the importance of abiding by the national public health measures currently in place at all times e.g. vaccination (including boosters), social distancing, use of face masks, hand hygiene, ventilation and minimising social contacts. More information at the following link:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/preventing-the-spread/>

3) Covid-19 cases that are connected with the school:

It is inevitable that cases of Covid-19 will arise in school over the next few weeks, just as they are currently arising in the community.

When multiple cases of Covid-19 arise in a class or school, those cases will be excluded and all children and staff in the class are offered antigen tests. Those children and staff do not need to be excluded from school unless they develop symptoms or have a positive antigen test.

Notwithstanding all of the above, we are looking forward to having a great term and things hopefully returning to normal.

Kind Regards


Pauline Dempsey
Principal