

Minister's Letter (14.10.20) - Extract to schools and Education Settings (see full letter attached):

I know that this year has been a very stressful time for education settings, schools, pupils and parents.

Today, the Executive has announced that schools and other education settings will have the half-term holiday break extended from 19 to 30 October. Education settings will be closed to all pupils during these two weeks including for vulnerable children and children of key workers. Schools and other settings will reopen on Monday, 2 November.

Schools are closed to all pupils. Principals should only bring staff into school during optional and exceptional closure days where they are unable to work from home. As this is an extension of the half-term break, it is not intended to be used for remote learning.

I am led to believe that the situation will be reviewed over the next 2 weeks to see what impact that school closures will have on the 'R' number. If there is not a reduction in the reproductive spread of the virus over the next 2 weeks we could possibly see the school having to remain closed for a further prolonged period which would instigate the commencement of Blended/Remote Learning (see attached Policy).

I would like to thank everyone for all the effort over the last 9 weeks in extremely challenging circumstances – it has been a great 'Team' effort so far and greatly appreciated by the school's Management Team.

This mini 'circuit breaker' is essential in fighting the pandemic and ensuring that the health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils is prioritised. Please make sure and avail of the break in order to gain some well-earned respite and be ready to return refreshed, at least to some extent, to face the second half of this term.

This additional period of school closure will hopefully go some way to alleviate the pressures we have all been facing.

Serious consideration must now be given to everyone's well-being and the need for rest. The break is an opportunity to focus on respite and to recharge the batteries for either face to face or remote teaching once we resume on Monday 2nd November 2020.

Take care and stay safe.

T.R. McMaster - Principal