



## DRUMAHOE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

As the children have returned to the 'new normal' in school this week, one aspect which I would appeal to you for your complete co-operation and diligence with is ensuring that children do not come to school if they are presenting any COVID-19 symptoms, particularly any typical respiratory symptoms.

Many other symptoms, e.g. colds, coughs and runny noses, have not previously prevented children attending school. However, I would strongly ask that no risks are taken within our school community and we ask you to err on the side of caution in this respect re. sending children to school.

Please keep the school informed immediately of any suspected COVID-19 symptoms or cases within our school families.

- Checklist of symptoms:
  - a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); OR
  - a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); OR
  - a loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

Our School is committed to the health and safety of all children and staff who attend here. As such, it may sometimes be necessary to require a poorly child, displaying symptoms other than COVID-19, to be collected early from a session or be kept at home until they get better.

In accordance with our procedures, parents/carers will be notified immediately if their child has become ill in school and needs to go home. Poorly children will be comforted, kept safe and under close supervision until they are collected. Please make sure that the 3 priority contact person details that you gave to school this week on the 'SIMS Data Pro-Forma' are kept up to date and in the order that you wish for them to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If a child has had to go home prematurely due to illness, they should remain at home until they are better for at least 24 hours, or according to the times set out in the attached "HSC/PHA Guidance for Schools." If a member of staff becomes ill at work, similar restrictions on their return will apply.

If a child or member of staff becomes ill outside school hours, they should notify the school office as soon as possible. The minimum exclusion periods outlined in the attached 'HSC/PHA Guidance' will then come into operation.

*Developing the potential of everyone to the full, within a caring and stimulating environment.*

Principal: T. R. McMaster B.Ed.



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If any infectious or communicable disease is detected on the school's premises, the school will inform parents/carers personally as soon as possible. The school is committed to sharing as much information as possible about the source of the disease and the steps being taken to remove it.

This correspondence is also to inform you that a pupil in our school has a rare disease known as Juvenile Dermatomyositis (JDM) that affects the muscles and skin. JDM is not infectious or contagious and belongs to a group of conditions that are thought to be autoimmune diseases whereby the immune system reacts in a different way causing inflammation affecting the skin and muscles.

As part of the pupil's treatment, medication has been prescribed that has the effect of weakening the immune system therefore making the pupil susceptible to infection.

To assist this pupil by preventing the spread of any infections, I again refer you to the 'Public Health Agency Guidance' on infection control in schools which details the recommended period to be kept away from school for rashes/skin infections, diarrhoea/vomiting, respiratory infections and other infections. I have also attached the HSC/PHA 'Do I Need to Keep my Child Off School' advice for reference purposes.

I know from personal experience over many years that children who are ill are normally kept off school at home but I thought it would be useful to provide you with the medical guidance on these matters.

Trusting in your support with this issue and we appreciate your support with these procedures.

Yours sincerely

T.R. McMaster MBE - Principal