

17/4/20



Dear Parent/Carer,

First of all, I very much hope that this email finds you all fine and well. After four weeks of 'lock-down' and dozens of telephone conversations with many in the Annick community, it is clear to me how close to home this pandemic really is and how fundamentally it is affecting our lives. Some within our 'family of families' are very much at the sharp end of caring for those struck down by this dreadful virus and I want to extend my thanks and admiration to those caring for patients who are so unwell in such demanding conditions - it is truly humbling. I know too that many who have close links to the school are providing key, essential services on a daily basis which are ensuring that we are all able to get through this worrying time. Again, all within the school community send you our sincere thanks.

Hopefully, all of our new P1 parents/carers will now have received word from North Ayrshire Council that they have a place in our school for next session. Once again we had a great many placing requests into our school and, as far as I can see, all have been granted. We have fifty-two new P1s coming to the school (hopefully) in August and I very much look forward to getting to know them. Parents/carers will understand that, with no return to school date in sight as yet, we shall be looking at how our extensive induction programme that was planned can be ready to kick-in should school re-open this side of the summer break. Watch this space - I'll let you know of any developments as soon as I can.

Our P7s also have now heard about any placing requests into S1 for next session. Again, as far as I can see, everyone was granted their request to either Irvine Royal or Greenwood academies. Obviously, the transition arrangements for these young people are also on hold; I'll be talking to senior managers next week about this but, again, it is difficult to see a way forward when the 'return to school' date is unknown. Any information I receive from the secondary schools will be sent to P7 parents/carers without delay. With fifty-two children entering our school next session and fifty-six leaving us, our roll will continue to be around 390 pupils (excluding our new early years children).

As I mentioned above, the school management team have been keen to keep in contact with families in our community and to hear how our young people are coping with these unusual and challenging times. Of course, everyone is in a unique set of circumstances but I have been struck by the many, many positive stories I have heard about our boys and girls making the very best of the situation. As long as routines are in place and plenty active and stimulating activities are on offer, invariably children will demonstrate great levels of resilience and robustness. There is always a silver lining and our young people seem to be extremely good at finding it! However, if any family is really struggling with the 'lockdown' situation then you should know that your school is there for you. We want to help and you should not hesitate in contacting me if you feel I can support you and yours in any way; your children really do mean the world to us.

As we approach the start of Term 4 next week you will start to receive your weekly/daily work programmes for your child(ren) again - this will continue for as long as we are away from school. For the next two weeks your teachers will be putting as emphasis on 'emotional and physical wellbeing'. This is in line with the 'Health Fortnight' we had intended running and is also particularly relevant under the present challenging situation. As always, the work programmes are there for you to use as you see fit; we do not see the home situation as a substitute classroom and don't want any added stress levels associated with school activities. However, there is a whole world of learning opportunities around young people in every setting and I would recommend a fun, active, 'real-life' approach to every family. The 'health fortnight' materials coming your way will be a great resource for you, I'm sure of that.

Finally, here I'm sure that you all would like me to send all our very best wishes to Mrs Mackenzie and Mrs McKinnon who are starting their maternity leaves now (Mrs McKinnon stops next Wednesday). It is lovely to have good news in all that is going on! All the very best ladies!

I wish you all well,  
Stuart Brown  
HEADTEACHER.