



Building
together
for our future.

Braidside Integrated Primary and Nursery School

**89 Frys Road, Ballymena Co. Antrim BT43 7EN
1989- 2019: 30 Years of Integration**

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Principal: J McAuley

www.braidside.co.uk

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

This morning we have received guidance from the Department of Education that schools should provide ***remote learning to pupils until the February half term.*** While we understand the need for this, given the deteriorating situation with the pandemic in Northern Ireland, we very much hope that we will have a return to face-to-face teaching after the half-term break.

During the previous lockdown and period of remote learning, we used our school website (class pages) for home learning. However, you will be aware, since the return to school in September, we moved our remote learning to See-saw (Nursery, P1, P2) and Microsoft Teams (MST) (P3-7). The class teams were introduced in term 1, children have already been working and completing tasks on the appropriate platform. We have been preparing for this situation, while hoping it would not be required. Additionally, we reviewed, updated and posted the school's ***Remote Learning Policy*** on our school website. I would advise all parents to take some time to read this, as it outlines the parameters for remote learning for the school community.

Remote learning has begun today for children in P1-P7 and will also commence for Nursery children from Mon 11th Jan. We will use a number of platforms to communicate with children and parents; namely the school website (class pages/ homepage for whole school notices), our school Facebook page and of course MST and Seesaw class platforms. For whole school communication we may also send out alerts from the app or text message service. Please ensure you check into these various streams on a regular basis. Teachers will be making regular contact with children and communication can also take place via email. In addition, school can be contacted through the school email account (info@braidsideintegratedps.ballymena.ni.sch.uk). This is checked daily from Mon-Fri. In this next 6-week period, we anticipate that a variety of pastoral calls will be made to children and families to check in and see how remote learning is progressing.

As a school, we view this time as a ***continuation of learning and teaching.*** Children have been very resilient throughout the first term, we made good progress and had a very positive start. We want to ensure all children maintain their learning so that when we do return to face-to-face teaching, we will all be ready to move forward again. To this end it is essential that children engage with their remote learning. We have robust systems in place, which allow teachers to provide feedback, assess the work and monitor the engagement. If you experience any difficulties at home, do not hesitate to make contact as soon as possible. We are focused on providing and continuing learning and will do as much as possible to assist children and families.

These past few days, teachers and assistants have been working diligently to prepare **learning support packs for every child**. Our approach to the learning packs is slightly different from previously. These packs are very structured and contain activities, teaching materials and resources for the children to use at home. Teachers will provide clear guidance as to what activities should be completed and will use these as a basis for their teaching. These learning packs will be returned to school after the period of remote learning, together with any resources contained within. It is vital that all completed activities and resources are returned to school. Learning packs will be distributed on **Friday 8th January**; using staggered times to ensure social distancing and with other mitigations in place. Packs will be collected from the main hall. There will be a one-way system in place. Parents are required to use the hand sanitiser provided on entry, follow the directions of staff available and use a face-covering while on the premises. Only 1 adult should attend to collect the learning packs. Your assistance in the smooth distribution of packs is much appreciated. Times are noted below:

11am- 11:15am: A-E
11:20am- 11:35am: F-K
11:40am- 11:55am: L-P
1:15pm- 1:30pm: Q-T
1:35pm- 1:50pm: U-Z

Children who are attending the supervised learning provision in school (key workers' children and vulnerable children) should ensure they bring their learning pack in to school every day and may also bring their own device, if they wish, to access Teams or See-saw.

During this next 6-weeks, there will be a variety of approaches employed by teachers including independent work, teacher-led work, research activities. This may also be supplemented by online materials, including links to apps, videos and other resources which are available. We will make parents aware of resources that will be suitable and can also be utilised at home. For example, you may be aware already that the BBC will be providing programmes on a daily basis for children. We will be incorporating as much variety and different opportunities as possible. While we will not be replicating a school timetable, we do hope there will be ample materials and opportunities for all children.

For families, where parents are working, either as key workers, or from home, we recognise that learning may take place at different times throughout the day. For some this will be during school hours, for others it may be in the evening. Remember every family will be different and we hope you will all find an approach which works for your family. Similarly, we know that in some families, with 2 or more school age children, parents will be supporting each child and we understand the limitations this places. Again, we are here to help and if parents have any concerns, queries please do make contact promptly.

Throughout this challenging time, the health and safety of the children and staff at Braidside has been paramount. In addition to the various measures and mitigations we have put in place, we also introduced the Well-being Wednesday initiative. This too will continue through the duration of remote learning. So we sincerely hope that on Wednesdays there will be an opportunity to focus on well-

being and activities which support a positive mental attitude. Please also be aware of whole school events and activities which may occur during this time e.g last time we had a whole tea-party and little video clips from the staff. If you can get involved! While we may not be together physically, our Braidside community are resilient, strong and committed to achieving the best for all our children.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to thank you for your support to date. I hope that you all stay safe and well in the weeks ahead.

Yours faithfully,

J McAuley _____

Principal.