**Knockavoe School and Resource Centre**

**10a Melmount Gardens,**

**Strabane,**

**Co Tyrone**

**BT82 9EB**

**Tel: (028) 71883319**

**Fax: (028) 71384750**

**Email:** **info@knockavoe.strabane.ni.sch.uk**

**Website:** [**www.Knockavoeschool.com**](http://www.Knockavoeschool.com)

**Principal: Mrs Sharon Cassidy B.A. (Hons), PGCE, PG Dip, PQH (N.I.)**

3rd January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that all our families had a good Christmas break and are now looking forward to getting back into routine.

As we approach the start of the new school term on Tuesday 4th January 2022, I know that many of you will be concerned about the continuing impact of the pandemic and increased number of positive cases in recent weeks. I want to assure you that health and safety is our main priority at Knockavoe and we will continue to practice all recommended safety mitigations and are committed to reviewing our whole school risk assessment on a regular basis.

In a recent communication from DE, following the latest NI Executive meeting, it was communicated that there is **no change** to the operation of schools in this new term. At Knockavoe, our main objective is to continue teaching and learning for all pupils with minimal disruption, where possible. Staff absences, lack of familiar staff and lack of suitably trained substitute cover will however impact on our ability to do this.

In the event of staff shortages there may be a need to close a class at short notice, following risk assessment, and advice from the Education Authority school link officer. This will be managed by the Senior Management Team daily and our aim is to communicate any changes to provision in good time. The management team endeavour to make decisions that will minimise disruption to our children’s education and learning and therefore class closures will only be considered as a last resort.

Should your child’s class be closed on any given day, you will receive a communication from the class teacher and a text message from our school text messaging service. Please continue to check emails daily and to keep in contact with us.

**Testing**

DE have asked that as an important mitigating measure that all staff and post primary pupils take a lateral flow test 24 hours before returning to school. I do however appreciate that not all pupils can do these Lateral Flow Tests.

Prior to the Christmas holiday period, our new weekly testing programme has had a low pupil uptake. I would ask that you consider participating in this new less invasive nasal swab test; details of which can be obtained from the school office.

Finally, I want to take the opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and understanding through these uncertain times. We will continue to work in partnership, and as our school vision states: ‘Reaching for a Brighter Future’. Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2022.

Kind regards

Sharon Cassidy

Principal