



# An Chroí Ró Naofa Senior National School

26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Re: **Covid-19 Update: Important Information for Parents**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I sincerely hope this letter finds you and your family safe & well during these challenging times.

Following recent developments and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) confirmation that all **schools will close until April 19<sup>th</sup> 2020**, please see below a number of important messages:

- The most significant message I can convey to you and our students is the absolute need to **practice social and physical distancing**, and to minimise physical contact with each other, to help avoid the spread of Covid-19. This should include avoiding meeting up and, in all circumstances, to adhere to HSE guidelines. Our school community urges you to support our children to maintain the restrictions on congregating for the safety of all in our community.
- During this period, our teachers will continue to be proactive and provide continuity of teaching and learning for our pupils. The main platform used to do this is **Class Dojo**. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to download the app. Teachers will send invitations to join the class and relevant codes by school text message.
- Please ensure that the school has up-to-date **contact details**. If you have recently changed your phone number and/or would like to update your information, please use the school's contact form on our website. <http://sacredheartsns.net/contact/>
- The DES has directed 'that all of the staff contribute to the **continuation of educational provision** for their students during this period.' Teachers will provide some tailored numeracy and literacy work through programmes such as Mathletics, Mangahigh, ReadingEggs etc. There will be a separate, more detailed posting in this regard. Teachers will continue to post a variety of other suggestions, tips and fun activities relevant to other curricular areas. However, remember that you are, and always will be, the primary educator of your child. These activities are intended to be helpful, not a hindrance. To be a fun challenge, not a chore. To be supportive, rather than obstructive. Dip in and use them in a way that best suits you, your child and your family. Don't dismiss the benefits of engaging in everyday activities and immense importance of play-based learning. 'The best education does not happen at a desk [or in front of a screen] but rather engaged in everyday living, hands on exploring, in active relationship with life – V.Gowman'
- The Department of Education and Skills' **NEPS psychologists** have developed advice and some resources for young people to manage and stay well when schools are closed.



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- Advice to young people while schools are closed
  - A Plan for the Day
  - Relaxation techniques
  - <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/information-for-schools-preschools-and-third-level-institutions-on-the-coronavirus.html#15>
- The sudden disappearance of school and other daily routines can be destabilising for children and families. Setting up new routines and structure can be helpful. They don't have to be regimented or perfect. NEPS psychologists have also developed guidance for parents supporting children to create new routines at home. Having a 'Plan for the Day' is key for children/young people to manage and stay well at this time.
- <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/guide-for-parents-supporting-children.pdf>
- **Supporting children with ASD**  
AFIRM have developed a free online toolkit designed to help families and caregivers supporting individuals with autism during the COVID-19 epidemic. This guide is full of user-friendly strategies, ready-made resources and examples, and links to additional supports to help families navigate this challenging time. Individuals with autism and their caregivers are especially vulnerable to the current stressors and this guide provides a toolkit of strategies that can provide some relief in these uncertain times.
- <https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/supporting-individuals-autism-through-uncertain-times>
- Family life has become a little more complicated now that we have to respond to Covid-19. **Barnardos** is available to support parents throughout this challenging time. They have developed a dedicated email and telephone support service to advise parents on a wide range of issues that may arise at this crucial time. You can find further details on the Barnardos' document on our website.

These are uncertain, unprecedented and unpredictable times for us all. We are continuing to adjust and adapt the best we can. When trying to think about how you can support yourself, your family, your community and your country in the coming weeks, remember these three key messages: Stay Responsible & Informed, Stay Active & Connected and Stay Positive & Calm – *NEPS*.

Yours faithfully,

G.Diver  
Principal



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