



11th June 2020

Dear Parents

I hope that you are well and continuing to stay safe.

I know that you will all be looking for information on our return to school. We have been working on various scenarios and plans for a return after the summer and it is proving to be an extremely challenging task. Ideally it would be great to welcome everyone back on the 27th August, new uniforms, hair cut and trimmed and shiny new schoolbags. This looks unlikely according to information being shared by the NI Executive, Department of Education and the Education Authority.

It seems that there will definitely be a phased return for our children. Media reports that some classes may return on 17th August – we have not had any official word on this at all. Discussions are ongoing between local principals, DE, EA & CCMS. There are many options and no firm decisions made yet.

Not all pupils will be in school at the same time, is the only thing that seems to be almost certain at this point due to social distancing restrictions that are in place. This will impact upon class groupings, child minding, transport, school meals, etc. In St Patrick's we will be aiming to ensure that any groupings and times to be in school are arranged with the best interests of children and their families in mind. There is probably no solution that will suit everyone, but we will do our best. The safety and wellbeing of staff and children will be at the centre of our planning and decision making.

I'm sure you and your children will have many, many questions regarding a return to school. I am sorry we do not have all of the answers yet. When we know exactly what is happening, you will be informed immediately. To use a cliché that has been said and written throughout this pandemic, this situation is, 'unprecedented', and finding solutions to the many issues raised is not easy. We in St Patrick's can only reassure you that decisions will always be taken in the best interests of our children.

In the meantime, please keep checking in with us via Seesaw and our school website. You have been so busy and your support for your children and for us as a school has been truly appreciated. Thank you.

M McGrath