**December Newsletter**

**New voluntary antigen tests for primary school children**

From 29 November, we are asking all parents to let us know immediately if they get a positive PCR result for their child. (The PCR tests are done at the test centres e.g., Fun Galaxy or Croke Park.) We will not share your child’s personal details with anyone. We will contact all the parents in that class to give them details of how to order free antigen tests for their children. (The antigen tests are the tests done at home.) The tests will be delivered to your home address.

The children in the class can attend school as long as they have no symptoms and do not have a positive Covid-19 test result (antigen or PCR). You can book a test online at the HSE test portal. If you are not able to book through the portal, your GP may be able to book for you.

The antigen testing programme is additional measure to help prevent the spread of COVID in our community. It is a voluntary programme. It has been introduced as an alternative to closing a whole class for ten days. All the other public health measures are still in place in schools i.e., masking by adults, sanitising, no mixing of classes, social distance, fresh air.

**If a child develops symptoms they should isolate at home and you should book a Covid-19 PCR test for them, even if the antigen (home test) gives a negative result.**

The symptoms to look out for are listed on a poster on our website and include any of the following:

* A new cough or worsening of an existing cough or shortness of breath OR
* High temperature OR
* Change in sense of smell or taste OR
* Other symptoms such as: sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, aches, and pains
* conjunctivitis (pink eye), vomiting, diarrhoea, skin rash

Parents may wish to check the Isolation Quick Guide for parents of children under 13 for further information on [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie). This useful guide is regularly updated. We also published the full Department of Education letter to parents on our website.

In summary, if your child has **ANY** symptoms, please arrange a PCR test either through your GP or the HSE portal and share the result with us in confidence. The rest of the class can then order the free home antigen tests, as a precaution.

If children are unwell while at school, we will call you and bring them to be minded by a staff member in the parents’ room (the isolation room) until you come to collect them. We therefore need **3 up-to-date contact numbers** for every child. Please keep your phone turned ON. If you have changed phone numbers recently or you’re unsure as to whether we have your up-to-date numbers please fill in the form on the other side of this sheet and give it to your child’s teacher.

**Winter Fun**

Winter has arrived. Children should dress warmly with plenty of layers under or over their uniform or tracksuit as the windows in the classrooms will be open all day. We have lots of new hats – just ask if you need one. Children should practise zipping up their jackets.

The children are still enjoying lots of outdoor play and exploring our school garden in winter.

Once again, we have lots of fun activities to keep the children busy and happy this month. The teachers are sharing photos and videos of the children’s learning on Class Dojo.

**Important dates**

Friday 10 December – The man in red will visit our outdoor Santa’s grotto

Friday 17 December – Christmas Jumper Day

Wednesday 22 December – Christmas holidays - half day

This December, we are practising the Advent value of “patient waiting”.

**School Calendar**

School calendars will be available to order soon. Order forms will be distributed this week.

We wish our families a safe and peaceful Christmas.

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**CHANGE OF PHONE NUMER OR NEW EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS**

Child: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New parent phone number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

New emergency contact number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_