**Ballymoney National School,**

**Ballineen,**

**Co. Cork.**

**Phone: 023-8847583**

**25th February 2022**

**Dear Parents,**

**Thank you!**

The lifting of restrictions in school will take place from Monday 28th February. For almost two years, you as parents have had to make sacrifices to adhere to the guidelines. At times, you may not have agreed with all of the guidelines. You have not been allowed into the school building since 2020, parent teacher meeting took place online or by phone, many children had no birthday parties, play dates were limited, junior infants had to walk into their classrooms alone in September, singing inside was discouraged, the two classrooms have not mixed and extra activities have been limited. You have all had to keep your children at home with symptoms. You supported our school Covid 19 response plan and it worked. No pupils caught covid 19 in our school and that is thanks to your sacrifices and support. Thank you!

**The Lifting of Restrictions**

* **Please note that the requirement to stay at home if you have symptoms remains - for students and staff alike. One of the key messages to manage the risks of covid-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of Covid-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread.**
* From Monday onwards, the wearing of facemasks will be optional in school. Staff and students may continue to wear a face mask if they wish to on a personal basis and schools will continue to make face masks available on request.
* Both classrooms may enter the school through the front door.
* All classes will have the same breaktime.
* Pupils will no longer have to keep their distance in the classroom.
* Parents will be welcome in the school building again.
* The school will continue to have an enhanced cleaning regime for the remainder of the school year.
* Hand sanitiser will continue to be provided.
* Facemasks on school transport will no longer be mandatory but will continue to be advised.

**Shrove Tuesday**

The children will have pancakes in school on Shrove Tuesday. This year we have three ripe lemons in the tunnel that are ready to be picked to go with our pancakes - perfect timing!

**Artist in Residence**

Clare McLoughlin, our artist in residence, has spent three weeks teaching the children some new art techniques. She will begin working on a project with them from next Wednesday onwards. All classes will be involved with the project which will take place in the shelter outside.

**World Book Day**

World Book Day will take place on Thursday 3rd March. The children may come to school dressed up as a character from a book they have read. We will have book themed activities happening in both classrooms during the day.

**Changemaker Nomination**

On Thursday 3rd March, the final interview in the Changemaker School nomination process will take place. DCU will interview a member of the Board of Management, a parent and a pupil about the school. They will be interviewed about creativity, empathy, leadership and teamwork in our school.

**Cycle Right Programme**

The Cycle Right Programme will begin on Friday 4th March for all classes. It will last for three weeks in the junior classroom and for six weeks in the senior classroom. The cost is €10 per pupil and this is covered by your Additional Activities Payment. Please send your children to school in PE gear on Fridays.

**PTA Meeting**

There will be a face to face Parent Teacher Association Meeting on Monday 7th March in the school. Please contact Geraldine Draper, Susan Eady or one of the teachers if you have any suggestions for the agenda. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend the meeting.

**Ficheall Chess Competition**

The Ficheall Chess Competition will take place online on Wednesday 9th March. All pupils, from 1st class to 6th class, will be given individual log in details.

**Dates for your Diary**

Monday 28th February The Covid 19 restrictions in schools end

Tuesday 1st March                      Shrove Tuesday

Thursday 3rd March                  World Book Day

Friday 4th March                        Cycle Right Programme begins

Monday 7th March                      PTA Meeting at 8pm in the school

Wednesday 9th March                Ficheall Chess Competition

Thursday 17th March                  St. Patrick's Day, no school

Friday 18th March                        Bank holiday, no school

Friday 8th April                            Easter holidays begin