



ABBEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

23rd March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I write this letter in the hope that you are well and safe given the escalating threat associated with the Covid-19 outbreak. Firstly, let me thank you for your patience and understanding to date as we work together as a school community to ensure the long-term health and safety of everyone within the Abbey Community College family.

Our Principal, Mrs Quinn, contacted and distributed information via the school's social media and Parent App. service on Friday to outline the process of facilitating the Department for Education's request for schools to embrace their social responsibility to cater for the children of Key Workers. The school extended an offer for parents within our school of children covered by this category to apply for provision. We had 4 queries from parents, but no applications.

Over the weekend the situation has escalated. The news reports, the projected data in relation the peak of this pandemic, the shortage of PPE and basic hygiene products, i.e. hand sanitiser, and advice from PHA and Health Workers was for people to stay at home.

This week has been identified as perhaps the most crucial in keeping the spread of Coronavirus to a minimum. On Friday all staff, Teaching and Non-Teaching, who are not self-isolating and are not within the vulnerable group category were directed by the Department of Education to be available for work here in the College today, Monday 23rd March 2020. Mrs Quinn took the decision to minimise risk and only a small number of staff were present today.

In light of the fact that no applications have been requested or received, and following discussions between the Board of Governors and Mrs Quinn, we have decided that; **Abbey Community College will now close for the foreseeable future for students, staff and children of Key Workers.** As Chair of the Governors I cannot give a guarantee that it would be safe.

This is not a decision that we have come to lightly, but we hope you all support us in our reasoning. The simple fact is that the Governors and Principal cannot be confident that we are not putting your child, our staff or their families at an increased and unnecessary risk under the current Department of Education or PHA guidelines.



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This decision, of course, does not impact upon the support we will continue to offer to our Parents / Guardians and students. The arrangements established and communicated last week in respect of remote learning will still be operational and we remain fully committed to the learning and teaching of our young people.

We realise that this may cause difficulties for families, and for that we apologise. As a College our primary responsibility is to ensure your child is safe and healthy whilst in our care and we are unable to give you this guarantee. As a formal educational setting we need to communicate and lead by example both in what we say and do. The advice to **STAY AT HOME** must be adhered to and our decision will alleviate any pressure on parents, staff, but most importantly our students in a climate of ambiguity and mixed messages which are fluid and continuously changing.

Take care, stay at home and keep safe.

Chairman of the Board of Governors