

# Our Lady's Girls' Primary School

Deanby Gardens, Belfast, BT14 6NN

Tel: 028 9074 6325

Principal: Mrs E Hughes

[www.ourladsdeanby.co.uk](http://www.ourladsdeanby.co.uk)



17 March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have been waiting for a Department of Education directive telling schools to close due to the coronavirus COVID-19. This has not happened yet. The latest government advice last night instructs all of us to:

- stop all non-essential contact with others
- do what we can to limit our social contact with others
- work from home where we possibly can
- avoid social venues
- self-isolate for 14 days if we have any of the key symptoms or if any of our family have these symptoms

This advice is completely at odds with the Department of Education's (DE) strategy of keeping schools open, and in opposition to the strategy adopted by most European countries.

After discussions with the Chair of Governors, we have decided to move School Development Days and an additional holiday to this week. By doing so, **the school will remain closed to pupils until Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.**

- **ALL AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE AND MONEY WILL BE RETURNED**
- **BREAKFAST CLUB WILL RUN AS NORMAL FROM MONDAY 23 MARCH**
- **TRAVEL TO & FROM SCHOOL BY BUS - TO BE CONFIRMED**

We have pupils and family members with compromised immune systems. We have staff with underlying health issues, going home to loved ones with compromised immune systems. We have a duty of care to all of these. Therefore, we ask that all families, allow their children to **work from home from tomorrow, Wednesday 18 March**, where they are safest. We believe that school closure is imminent but that as a community we would be very foolish to wait for this announcement from DE.

We have already provided packs of work for your daughter to carry on with at home. These went home in schoolbags last Thursday and Friday. If you did not receive the pack, ring the office and leave your name and we will get back to you, but please check your daughter's

schoolbag before doing so. **Please do not phone the school unless you have an urgent message to convey, as we need to maintain open lines as much as possible.**

We also understand that some families will not be able to facilitate their child/children working at home at short notice and I want to reassure you that your children can continue to come to school from Monday 23 March. **However, we hope that we will continue to have enough staff to provide a skeleton service.**

While DE keeps schools open, the staff who are well, will be working to develop our ability to connect with you all during what is likely to be a long closure.

From next week, should you need to contact your daughter's teacher, please email [info@ourladysgirlsprimary.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@ourladysgirlsprimary.belfast.ni.sch.uk)

Please **put the teacher's name in the title line** and the email will be forwarded to the teacher, if the teacher is well and in school. We will try to respond to you as soon as possible. However, we ask for your patience in this matter as we cannot guarantee anything at this time.

It is difficult to manage and operate school under these current conditions, so thank you for your understanding, support and patience. Our staff continue to want the best for your daughter. We will communicate with you via text with any updates as soon as we can. Please contact the school if you have recently changed your mobile phone number. In the meantime, keep well and look after your families as best you can.

Yours sincerely,

*Emer Hughes*