Dear Parents/Carers

We are always encouraged by the many acts of kindness we see happening around us and people reaching out to others.  Equally we can become discouraged when we see quite the opposite.  As a school we are extremely grateful to all the families who are doing the right thing just now by following government advice and isolating as necessary.  Sadly, there have been negative remarks and unkind messages made in relation to ‘skiving’ from school.  Whilst social media and online games can be a great way of maintaining positive contact with others, unfortunately they can also facilitate negative, unkind remarks being made.  We currently have 55 pupils absent from school today who will feel miserable missing out on being here, especially at this time of year.  Only messages of kindness and concern will help these pupils and their families.

Many of our children and young people will find having to isolate particularly challenging, amongst all the other challenges they can face in their lives. With this in mind, please find attached information from Kooth Digital Mental Health Service about what is available during December to support children and young people, including mental wellbeing support through dedicated Chat sessions. This is appropriate for 10–18-year-olds.

**Class Christmas Parties……**these are in full swing!  For pupils who missed their class party, their party bags will be kept for them until they return to school!

**‘Movie Morning’ on the last day of term……**Classes have all voted for their preferred movie for this coming Tuesday.  One of the benefits of having a virtual cinema experience is that not every class has to watch the same film!  Pupils will have a break/movie pause at 10:30/10:55 as appropriate for their stage and they will have their playtime snack then outside during their morning break.  Snacks consumed in classrooms requires additional desk cleaning before and after, additional hand washing etc and so anything we can do to avoid additional workload for staff and unnecessary risks in relation to infection is important.

**Universal Free School Meals for Primary 5……**School meals to all pupils in P5 will be free from Wednesday 5th January 2022.Couldany parents that are in arrears please ensure they make the necessary payments to clear any outstanding balance. All accounts with a credit balance will be followed up in the new year to refund or transfer to siblings.

Please follow this link for the menu and allergen information:

[ourshire primary menu portal](https://ourshiremenus.mysaffronportal.com/Menus)

For dietary queries please email; [medicallyprescribeddietarysupport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:medicallyprescribeddietarysupport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

The iPayimpact system is being updated with P5 pupils being transferred to universal free school meals for our return in January.

**As always……**If your child is unwell but they are not displaying symptoms of coronavirus, please keep them at home until they are back in good health. Please do not send unwell children to school to see how they cope.  Do keep them at home until you are sure they are fit and well. Please continue to err on the side of caution. **We really appreciate all you are doing here!**

**All household contacts of any Covid cases should isolate for 10 days, regardless of vaccination status, and even if they initially get a negative PCR test.  Non-household contacts can leave isolation if they have had a negative PCR test and have had two vaccine doses.**

**Face coverings should be worn by parents and other visitors to the school site,** whether entering the building or otherwise, **including parents at drop-off and pick-up.**

For vomiting and/or diarrhoea, as per normal circumstances, pupils should remain at home for at least 48 hours after symptoms have passed. This now also relates to a fever or high temperature (alongside a negative coronavirus result) and they should not return to school for at least 48 hours after symptoms have passed.

**To help reduce the risk to your family and to help reduce the likelihood of spread of coronavirus in school and the community, please:**

* Undertake the recommended twice weekly lateral flow testing as this can catching infections early.
  + Free at-home LFD test kits are available for you and your primary-school aged children by collection from COVID test centres or pharmacies, or delivery by ordering online. More information can be found at: [www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/no-covid-symptoms](http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/no-covid-symptoms).
  + Please ensure that all test results, whether positive, negative or void, are recorded on the online portal at: [www.covidtest.scot](http://www.covidtest.scot) OR by phoning 119.
  + Lateral flow tests should not be undertaken if an individual has tested positive for coronavirus in the last 90 days.
* Arrange vaccination as soon as possible, if you or anyone eligible in your family have not yet been vaccinated. Information can be found at [www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine](http://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine). Vaccination is our best defence against COVID-19 causing anyone to become seriously unwell.
* Wear a face covering in line with guidance, keep your distance, keep rooms ventilated, and wash your hands with soap and water regularly.

**What to do if you or your child develop symptoms**

If you or your child develop a new continuous cough, or high temperature, or a loss of/ change in sense of taste or smell, your child must not come to school. The symptomatic person should arrange a PCR test as soon as possible, and the whole household should stay at home until the test result comes back.

PCR tests can be arranged at [**www.nhsinform.scot**](http://www.nhsinform.scot)at your nearest COVID-19 test site. There are drive-through, walk-through and mobile testing units across Scotland which are open from 8-am until 8pm, 7 days a week. A full list of sites can be found at [**Gov.Scot**](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/pages/covid-symptoms/) or go to [**COVID Testing (nhsgrampian.org)**](https://www.nhsgrampian.org/covid-19/covid-testing/)

Further information on testing and self-isolation can be found at [**www.nhsinform.scot**](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

Please continue to take care.

Kindest regards

**Margaret M. Ferguson**

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Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children’s Services

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**‘Being the best we can be’**

**Respect-Honesty-Responsibility-Kindness-Hardworking**