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| scan0003  *Learning through faith, laughter and love.* |
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15-03-2020

Dear Parent

As you will be aware, our political leaders announced yesterday that all nurseries, schools, colleges and universities should remain open at present until further notice.

As school leaders, we were deeply shocked and disappointed at this reckless decision and since the announcement, many principals have been evaluating our position and the options open to us in managing a very difficult and worrying situation.

A meeting is scheduled to take place tomorrow morning, when the INTO, the largest teaching Union in the North, will meet with representatives from the Department of Education.

The union is working behind the scenes to exert pressure on politicians to issue a directive to close all schools and the meeting tomorrow is another opportunity to appeal to the Department to back this stance.

I am hopeful the meeting will achieve a positive outcome for our children and if I have any information on this before it reaches the media, I will be sharing this with you, through our website.

In the meantime, should the decision be to keep schools opened, we intend to put alternative measures in place. This decision has been taken by the senior managers of St Mary’s in conjunction with our Board of Governors.

As already outlined on our holiday list, we have three days holiday scheduled at the end of May. It is proposed to bring the pupils in on those days and move our staff training days to Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of this incoming week.

**Therefore, pupils are off for all of this week and the situation will be reviewed on Friday.**

To facilitate home learning, our teachers have been putting together suitable activities for their classes to complete. Some classes have already received these. All recommendations for home study will be posted on our website by tomorrow afternoon.

We will suggest many excellent websites in addition, should your child need extra activities to keep them busy.

We realise how challenging all of this must be for both you and your children. Please continue to encourage your children to say a daily prayer, as they would in school.

I believe our children’s prayers are very powerful.

Please check our website regularly over the coming days.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Brenda Casey