

## Carrigeen NS

[www.carrigeenns.com](http://www.carrigeenns.com)

'Promoting full personal, moral and social development in caring Christian communities of learning and teaching.'



**'Déan do dhícheall' - 'Do your best'**

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Dear parents/guardians and children,

First of all, I would like to extend my warmest well wishes to every family in our school community. To parents and members of our school community who work in the health service or continue to provide supply of goods and essential day-to-day services, we owe a debt of gratitude.

The entire staff and board of management are currently working to ensure that your children are supported at home in what are extremely challenging times for primary education in our country. We are and will continue to support your children in the weeks ahead.

Rest assured the commitment and duty of care to your children's education and happiness still remains as strong as ever among the entire staff of our school.

Since our enforced closure on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> March, teachers have been working to create communication platforms to outline work and guidance regarding this work on a weekly basis from this week on. Please remember that these platforms-email or blogs- can be used for support where necessary.

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### ***'Déan do dhícheall' - 'Do your best'***

I want to take this opportunity to offer some guidance, advice and where possible some reassurance .

Our school motto, ***'Déan do dhícheall' - 'Do your best'*** has never been more relevant for children but especially for parents who are juggling many more balls now than some weeks ago. It has become my motto in recent days with a slight extension! ***'Déan do dhícheall' - 'Do your best in light of your own situation and keep your family well'***

With my wife working her job where interruption is not an option and yours truly 'working' as a teaching principal from the kitchen table at home while 'teaching' my two eldest coupled with changing, feeding and playing with the 2 year old, the appreciation for what my parents- who are missing their adoring grandchildren - do for us week in week out has never been greater.

While I count my blessings on so many fronts, reflecting on this last week's schooling challenges at home has allowed me to identify some advice and guidance for most.

Chairperson, BOM- Mr.Eamon Delahunty  
Principal-Damien Aylward  
Deputy Principal-Margaret Brennan



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### ✚ 'Action is the antidote to despair'

A member of our parent body shared this wonderful thought with me recently. It emphasises the importance of **doing** something each day in light of this situation...anything colourful and active...maybe within the blog or the email or maybe beyond it.....Something for yourself, your child alone or with their siblings or you with your children is truly a remedy to negative thoughts dominating our day. Maybe once a week- a walk, a talk, read a book at bedtime, a chat on the phone with grandparents, a boardgame....

### ✚ Prioritise and get the basics in order

Following online staff meetings, teachers have agreed a whole school approach in terms of prioritising curriculum work. Again the work is not prescriptive in terms of **how much should be done**.

Even if all aspects in each house were equal in terms of parental support, time spent at the table and number of children etc (**which it's not**), **all children in the same class learn and achieve at different rates**. In the class there's a wide range of levels in all subjects, there's different paces and there are many kids working on differentiated levels of work in line with all needs. It's very difficult for teachers to differentiate work accurately at the moment as we are trying to be conscious of situations in homes.

### ✚ Keep them reading...it is very effective and all research backs this up!!! This part is prescriptive :)

Shared reading with younger ones-infants- and up to the age that they enjoy it. DISCUSS THE BOOK WITH THEM...**Ask lots of why do you think questions-get them thinking critically and talking??**

1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> should take advantage of Accel. Reader. Programme. **If any student is short on books**, take advantage of the Accelerated Reader Articles . The link is on the child's own homepage and it has about 1000 articles to choose from.

### ✚ As Majella O'Donnell said on The Late Late Show- 'Take it day by day'- Make your decisions day by day.

Be the decision maker here- If they look like they need a break outside, let them have it. If they spend most of a beautiful Monday outside while both parents are extremely busy, that is okay. If it is a rainy day, perhaps the day could be top heavy on board games, reading and art. Avoid over doing 'mind-sapping' activity on a day when children cannot get outside. If you can settle into a daily routine of 2-3 hours work with breaks mixed in, just as good.

**Again, your child's class teacher is here to support you.** We are all here to help where we can. If you have a query or need guidance, please email or use the blog forum. You can also email [carrigeen.scoil@gmail.com](mailto:carrigeen.scoil@gmail.com). Emails will be replied to promptly.

Prioritise for your house on a daily/ weekly basis. Maybe you will be able to assist your child at different times or in different ways due to circumstances as they arise. This is okay. **Do not underestimate your child's ability to learn independently.** Facilitate this independent learning where necessary by simply encouraging it. It will build character, resilience and ultimately develop self reliance.

### ✚ Focus on your child's strengths and level of ability- DO NOT COMPARE

Allow your child's self esteem to flourish and develop. Praise their efforts and as difficult as this **will be**, try not to verbalise frustrations to them. Do not feel guilty or go down the road of wondering how much work their friends have got done in the last week. **'Déan do dhícheall'- 'Do your best'**

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This is not homeschooling. This is an unprecedented emergency situation impacting the whole world. **Let's keep perspective and work together.** Homeschooling is a choice, where you considered it, you plan for it and you are your child's school teacher in whatever form you choose. This is, at best, distance learning. In reality, it's everyone trying to separate their bums from their elbows, working as hard as they can in an unprecedented time.

✚ **See the value in Lego, board games and playing outside.**

All of this is learning. Extremely valuable learning. Utilise it and enjoy it.

✚ **How can I get three different lots of work done with 3 children of different ages?**

Prioritise whatever contact time is available with the younger ones. If they're old enough, try to get them to do little **bits independently**. Allow the teacher to help with any issues for children at the older end of the family-perhaps screenshot a piece of 'problem work'/question to the teacher via email.

✚ **So what's the bare minimum you'd expect?**

For me, it is survival mode at home. After reading the emails/blogs from your child's teacher rest assured that behind all the lists lies a deep feeling of perspective. We accept that you to do what is best for yourself to be your best for your children. The answer to the question above will flow naturally if we can do this..

We are doing enough. We are loving our kids and supporting them through a difficult time. Look after yourself. This will cause stress and anxiety in people and this is entirely natural. Minimising stress by identifying ways to **combat or reduce** it is absolutely vital at a time like this for mental health and the wellbeing of children. Seek out moments of fun with your children.

If it is practical, I will endeavour to email short recorded video links from myself to each individual class in the next week to keep in touch and hopefully announce an award or two regarding reading activity an upcoming Easter Art Competition and Easter Quiz for all classes!!!

***If anyone has any art work or videos that they would like posted to the school Twitter account to share with classmates, please email them to [carrigeen.scoil@gmail.com](mailto:carrigeen.scoil@gmail.com).***

I wish you, your entire family and your neighbours the very best. **"Do your best' and** God Bless.

Yours faithfully,

Damien



Damien Aylward- B.Ed.,H.Dip.Law Ed.  
Principal.

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