**Allen National School**

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Registered Charity Number: 20124496

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Dear Girls and Boys,

I do hope you are all staying well and taking care of yourselves and your family members by following the rules the Taoiseach and Minister Harris are setting for us all. This is a very unusual period of time we are having at present. It is unprecedented – that means it hasn’t really happened before – so I guess young and old are all learning how to adjust to what is being asked of us. But we are all doing a great job so far ….. let’s keep it up now!

I try to keep it simple and not complicate it. There is a virus about and we have to mind each other. The virus needs us to have close contact with other people – that way it can jump from one to the other of us and spread. It will effect some people more than others and has been found to make some people very sick. We have to be SMARTER than the virus. And the good news is WE ARE!!

Our scientists have observed the behaviour of the virus under the microscope and they have been able to tell us what it does to keep spreading. They tell us it likes to stay on our hands and hop onto anything we touch except soap. It likes to jump onto the air when we sneeze or cough and it likes to jump from one of us to the other but it can only jump 2 metres. So with this knowledge we can outsmart the virus by:

 (1) washing our hands frequently with soap while we sing Happy Birthday twice;

(2) sneeze or cough into a tissue and bin the tissue straight away or if you have no tissue sneeze or cough into your elbow – its trapped then at your elbow (!!); and

(3) stand at least 2m away from any other person you are with. The less people we are near the less opportunity there is for the virus to get near us! That’s why each of us has been given the job of staying at home away from other people by the Taoiseach.

I know that it is difficult being at home all the time. You miss school and your friends. But you are living through a very important period of history. Your children and grandchildren will be learning all about this time when they are in school. It will be in their history books. They will learn of how we outsmarted the virus by staying apart even though it was so hard for us to do. They will learn of how brilliant we all were to keep it up for weeks at a time. They will learn we did it because we cared about all our families and the community.

I know it might be scary if you think too much about it and that’s probably what the virus wants us to do. If we sit and think about it too much, and get all worried, we might forget to wash our hands or use a tissue or stay apart and that’s exactly what it would love, because then it can get the opportunity to spread again. It natural to feel worried have a chat with someone about your worries but remember what I am telling you we are SMARTER than the virus!!

We are hearing a lot about the brave doctors and nurses, the shopkeepers, butchers, shop workers, truck drivers gardai etc who are all going to work to keep us healthy and fed and safe. We all owe them a huge ‘Thank You’. They are doing fantastic work while the rest of us stay at home. Some of your parents and family members are involved in these jobs. You must be so proud of them, I am.

But the job we have been given is even more important in some respects. You, your brothers and sisters and your parent(s) and I and all the teachers have been given the job of doing our best to keep safe and we have also been given the job of continuing to do our school work.

The Minister of Education has written to all Principals and has asked them to ensure that the teaching and learning continues. This is why I am writing to you now. I NEED YOU – ALLEN SCHOOL NEEDS YOU - YOU ARE MY FRONTLINE LEARNER I need you to help the adults in your house to get some school work done.

I need you to ensure everyone in your house is following the hand washing, sneezing/coughing, staying apart and staying at home rules.

I need you to help your teacher by doing the work they are sending you. They will send it to your parent on the Class DoJo. Please help your parent by having your school materials ready – pencil case, copy, book etc. Pick a time that suits yourself and mam or dad each day and just sit down and get the work done. If you are able to do it by yourself that would be great they can get some of their jobs done at the same time and that leaves more time free to enjoy later. If you can’t do something that’s ok too. Mam or Dad can help or they can ask teacher how to do it and they will help you. Mam or Dad will know how much you are to do each day. It is important you follow what they tell you. Soon your teacher might start to ask you to send them back some of your work. In any case I will be asking you for it when school open again.

Don’t panic if you have not been doing all the work so far. I’m going to monitor it from today on. I will be e-mailing and phoning teachers and parents to check in and see how you are getting on. Teachers will be giving the DoJo points and I will be able to see those.

I promise we will have challenges and prizes and lots of fun things as well as the work. Just look on it as homework. It has to be done and you are responsible for doing it as best as you can.

Everyone has a role to play in getting through this time. Its important, now that you know your job, that you do it and that, like the doctors and nurses, you do it because you are proud to help your community – your school community – your teachers, your friends, your parents and ME!!

When the worry of the virus is gone, and we all get back to school, we will have the biggest party EVER!!

Until then, stay safe, follow the rules, and remember, I NEED YOU YOU - ARE MY FRONTLINE LEARNER – we cannot do this without you.

If you have any questions your Mam or Dad can e-mail me they have my details.

God Bless

Ms McDonagh