



27<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Parent Circular No. 7

**RE: School Closure due to National Coronavirus/ COVID-19 Emergency**

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),

I hope you and your family are safe and well in these extraordinary times.

As you know the national closure of schools has been extended until at least the end of the Easter holidays on 19<sup>th</sup> April. The decision has been taken following advice from the NPHET (National Public Health Emergency Team) as part of efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19.

The purpose of this circular is to provide you with some important information relevant to the current school closure.

**1. Social & Physical Distancing**

The Department of Education & Skills and HSE have asked schools to convey to children the absolute need to practice social and physical distancing, and to minimise physical contact with each other, to help avoid the spread of Covid-19. This includes avoiding meeting up and adhering to HSE guidelines. As part of the school community, parents and guardians are strongly urged to support their children to maintain the restrictions on congregating for the safety of all in the community.

The HSE has published information notices (in 17 different languages) which are available on the school's website in the ['COVID-19 Closure' blog](#).

**2. National Education Psychology Service (NEPS) – Advice for Parents**

The Department of Education and Skills' NEPS psychologists have developed advice and some resources for children young people to manage and stay well while schools are closed. Links to the following NEPS resources are available on the school's website in the ['COVID-19 Closure' blog](#).

- Advice to young people while schools are closed
- Plan for the Day
- Relaxation techniques
- Guide for Parents Supporting Children with Routines
- Advice for parents and schools on talking to children and young people about Covid-19.

### **3. Teaching & Learning Activities During the 'COVID-19 Closure'.**

Our priority and focus over the coming weeks, and possibly months, should be to keep everyone safe and happy. Children need to be worry free, happy and creative, not stressed. There is enough for all of us to be concerned about in our family lives without adding more.

As teachers we realise that these days are difficult, and we want parents and guardians to know that the homework and learning activities we put forward are not compulsory. They are guidelines for you to follow in whatever way suits you and your family. We have done our best to compile a list of work and activities that should keep their bodies and minds busy should you choose to follow them.

This article offers a practical point of view and may be of interest to you:

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/stop-trying-to-be-superheroes-principal-s-message-to-parents-1.4213128>.

As the school was preparing to close on 12<sup>th</sup> March, class teachers assigned homework for pupils up until 29<sup>th</sup> March which was the original closure period. A comprehensive list of additional learning activities were published on the school website's 'News' blog was also published earlier this week for pupils to engage with up to the Easter holidays which begin at the end of next week.

The school is preparing for the likely extension of the school closure beyond 19<sup>th</sup> April. If this happens, we will send you a menu of additional homework and learning activities.

We are also working on how we can facilitate direct links between teachers and pupils/ parents regarding the homework and learning activities after Easter.

### **4. Home-School Communication During the 'COVID-19 Closure'.**

Telephone messages/ voicemails to the school office will be checked regularly as will emails to [info@sixmilebridgens.ie](mailto:info@sixmilebridgens.ie). We are endeavouring to keep you informed through parent circulars, the website, texts and Twitter.

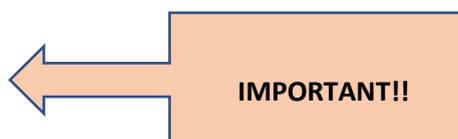
We recognise that parents and teachers may need to communicate with one another directly during any prolonged closure. If you need to contact your child's teacher(s) please do so by emailing the school office and we will forward your email to the relevant teacher(s) who will respond at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **Aladdin Schools Connect**

The school is also working on rolling out a new School Communication System called '*Aladdin Schools Connect*'. Aladdin Connect is something we had been planning to introduce for next September, but its introduction has been brought forward because it may be necessary if schools remain closed after Easter.

Please read the [Aladdin Schools Connect Preparation Letter](#).

You must notify the school by **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020** if there are any personal concerns or legal provisions in place regarding giving access to any parent/ guardian of your child.



You can contact the school at [info@sixmilebridgens.ie](mailto:info@sixmilebridgens.ie) in confidence.

Le gach dea ghuí,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Heagney', is displayed on a light grey rectangular background.

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Gareth Heagney

(Príomhoide)