



# Scoil Chéile Chríost Rathmore NS

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## Covid-19 School Closure Until Further Notice

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope that you and your families are continuing to keep safe and well during this unprecedented Covid-19 health crisis. On behalf of the staff and *Board of Management* of the school, I wish to offer my condolences to those of you who may have lost family members during the pandemic and those of you who may be unwell or attending to family members who are sick. It has been a particularly difficult time for those in our community who have experienced the bereavement of a loved one.

On Friday, 10th April last, the Minister for Education, Joe McHugh TD, announced that, as part of the wider public health measures, all schools will remain closed until further notice. This decision was taken on foot of updated advice from the *National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET)*. The directive to schools to remain closed also has implications for students who were scheduled to sit State Examinations in June and their families and we can appreciate the extra worry it has caused.

***Scoil Chéile Chríost, Rathmore N.S. will not now re-open after the Easter holidays on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April as planned in our school calendar.*** As previously advised, the *Board of Management* held a remote Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March and again on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April of this week as part of contingency planning for teaching and learning should the school remained closed after the Easter holidays.

All teachers in Rathmore N.S. will be using their newly assigned Office 365 secure email addresses to communicate with parent/guardians and assign a manageable timetable of schoolwork for the children in their classes during this last term. This timetable will include a balance of both formal schoolwork that is age appropriate and informal creative activities such as reading stories, play, art, baking and physical education. I am aware that many parents/guardians are feeling overwhelmed at their attempts to home school while also trying to work remotely and attend to their families. Poor broadband connectivity in certain locations is another difficulty experienced by many of you, as is the availability of digital devices in homes with multiple users.

However, I would encourage all parents/guardians to engage with the Timetable which your child's class teacher will email to you as best you can, taking account of your particular family situation. Look at it as a menu of activities from which you can choose what works for you and your child, as teachers cannot replicate the normal school day from their homes. All support teachers are liaising closely with class teachers to support the pupils in their care. Please stay in touch with your child's teacher and you can

provide some feedback on how your child is managing the class timetable of schoolwork as this will help the teachers to adapt their lessons if necessary. I strongly recommend using this opportunity to read more often with all children in the junior classes to develop reading fluency and to encourage older children to engage in more regular reading of books. The RTE programme '*Home School Hub*', which is broadcast daily is another very useful educational resource for all primary school children.

I extend a big 'hello' to all our pupils and thank them for working with their teachers and sending them pictures and samples of some of their completed work. The wellbeing of our children supported by their teachers and their families is of the utmost importance at this time as they are missing their friends, their teachers and normal school life. A big 'thank you' to all parents/guardians for your patience and co-operation since the start of this health crisis and thanks to the teachers and staff of Rathmore N.S who are working to support all the children in the school in difficult circumstances.

I will continue to send you updates through the *Aladdin Connect System* as the situation evolves. Please remember to follow all the HSE guidelines in relation to hand washing, coughing/sneezing etiquette and social distancing. If we work together as a school community and follow the public health guidelines, we will come out the other side of this health crisis and hopefully can look forward to a return to school in Rathmore N.S. in the near future.

Take care and stay safe.

Lucy Travers

Principal Teacher