#### NewsletterMarch 11th 2020

Dear Parent

We would like to bring the following to your attention

***Covid-19 Virus update.***

We are all familiar with the rumours currently circulating regarding the Corona Virus Covid-19. While it is difficult to definitively disregard all of the current information, it is fair to say that there is a fair amount of misinformation being peddled across social media. I would implore parents not to become unduly alarmed and to follow current advice issued from credible sources only. As such the medical profession is the only authority from which to heed advice.

At Scoil Íosa we are monitoring the situation on a daily basis and have followed all advice issued to date pertinent to attempting to control the spread of the disease. To our knowledge there are no cases of Covid-19 among the school community and had there been such, the HSE would have intervened with advice as to the appropriate steps to be taken. At this juncture all teachers have discussed necessary hygiene steps with all of the children. This includes practical demonstrations on hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette. We have held a school assembly for all pupils from first class where the virus was discussed, hygiene practices reiterated and efforts made to alleviate any anxiety that may have existed among the children. We have also installed hand sanitisers at the main entrance to the school and have displayed all posters issued by the HSE. It is also intended to replace fabric towels with disposable paper towels for the duration of the Covid-19 alert.

However, we cannot predict what further steps may be taken by the Chief Medical Officer to further contain the disease. At this point in time there is no plan for wholesale closure of schools that we are aware of. The school has received a communication from the CMO which clearly states that no unilateral action should be taken by schools with any closures occurring on advice from the CMO only. This may change on a daily basis as the virus escalates.

To assist us with ensuring that parents receive up to date information, please ensure that we have the correct contact information including mobile numbers. We have been informed that we will be required to supply these to the HSE should they request them in an emergency situation. Secondly please make sure that you reinforce good hygiene habits with the children, particularly with reference to hand washing and coughing/sneezing. Please also make sure that you use the hand sanitisers on entering the school premises.

Please be informed that the situation may change on a daily basis. We are monitoring this closely and will keep parents updated by text and on the school website ([www.iosaballyhaunis.com](http://www.iosaballyhaunis.com)). Parents are also strongly advised to keep up to date by referring to the Department of Education website ([www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)) which contains links to all sites of relevance such as the HSE. We ask you to remain vigilant and to keep yourselves up to date on developments and please disregard alarmist or fake news circulating. Speak calmly to the children and once again please insist on good hygiene habits.

***St Patrick’s Day Closure***

The school will close on **Monday 16th** and **Tuesday 17th**March for the St Patrick’s Day holiday. We will reopen on Wednesday March 18th at the usual time unless otherwise advised.

***First Confession***

Congratulations to all of the boys and girls in Second Class who received their First Confessions Tuesday March 3rd. Thanks to Ms. Ruane and Mrs. Richardson for preparing the children for the occasion.

***Enrolment of new pupils***

Enrolment of new pupils to Scoil Íosa is now ongoing.Please forward any outstanding applications as a matter of urgency. Places are available on a first come first served basis strictly in accordance with the requirements of the school’s enrolment policy. Places are severely limited in all classes from 1st-6th class with applicants placed on a wait list.

With Thanks,

K. Dennedy