

Dear Parents,

As we walk into our classrooms this afternoon, we cannot help but feel an enormous amount of emotions.

We feel empty because our classrooms are no longer filled with the laughter, excitement or weekend talk from our pupils.

We feel sad because the art projects that we started last Friday and haven't yet finished, are lying on the back worktop, and at this time we do not know when or if we will get the chance to finish them.

We feel relieved that we no longer have to have sleepless nights wondering how we will ensure all your children, our pupils, will stay healthy during a pandemic whilst in our supervision during school hours.

We feel tired because now we'll lose sleep, worried about how our pupils will handle a switch to remote learning and how we will do our best to deliver it to them.

We feel guilty for feeling relieved that we no longer have to stress about how we are going to disinfect every surface in our classrooms every hour, where we would even get the cleaning supplies to disinfect our classrooms, or how we would have been able to keep the pupils 1 to 2 metres apart.

We feel angry because in this day and age, how can a virus control so much of our lives?

We feel sorrow for all the substitute teachers, classroom assistants, and bus drivers that are now trying to find alternative income during this time.

We feel stress for all the families that are frantically searching for child care because they still need to work to provide for their families.

But most of all we feel heartbroken. 💔

Heartbroken that there are people in this world thinking teachers only wanted closure of schools so that we could get a longer break.

Heartbroken that people do not fully understand how much these kids truly mean to a teacher.

Heartbroken that there are people out there that do not realise a teacher would risk their own health for the health of someone else's child.

We are heartbroken because those students are our family five days a week, and now our classrooms are empty.

These are tough times for everyone. Everything is very unpredictable right now. We need to support each other.

We may have our classes back in a few weeks or we may not see the pupils until the new school year. For now, please know that your children were a part of our family too, and walking into empty classrooms this afternoon is just as hard for us as it was for you having to find child care.

Right now the safety of our children, and everyone else is very much the priority. We hope you all stay safe and healthy during this time, and once schools are open again, we promise to be waiting with open arms, welcoming our family back.

Yours sincerely,

Teachers and classroom assistants in empty classrooms at Ballytober.