

18/08/20

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you and your families remain safe and well.

Following the Education Restart Guidance issued on Thursday August 13th, I can now confirm arrangements for pupils’ return to school.

Plans agreed by the Board of Governors remain largely unchanged. All pupils will return to school 5 days a week and a protective bubble strategy will operate to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission. Adults must remain 2m from each other and at least 1m from pupils at all times but social distancing rules among children within a protective bubble have been relaxed.

The school day however will look very different as the following strategies have been introduced for safety reasons:

Start of the School Day:

* School transport should only be used if there is no other alternative. It is strongly recommended that pupils travelling on school transport wear a face covering. Parents must ensure that all pupils wash their hands before leaving home. Pupils should face forward on the bus and be encouraged to sit beside family members or pupils from their bubble. Any pupil displaying any of the COVID 19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss or change in your normal sense of taste or smell) must not be sent to school under any circumstances. This is vitally important for the safety of everyone.

Arrival at School:

* No pupils will be allowed to enter the school building until 8.45am. This is a very important change which must be followed. From 8.45am to 9.20am, pupils may arrive at school.
* Both gates will be used to avoid congestion. Miss Kealey’s class (P1/2) and Ms Herron/Mrs Redmond’s class (P5) must enter the school playground/building via Gate 2 (beside the school pitch) and access their classroom from the external doors. P2/3, P4, P6 and P7 pupils must all enter the school playground/building via Gate 1 (beside P.6 class). No pupils should enter the school via reception. Parents may drop pupils off at these gates but there can be no congestion- all adults must obey social distancing rules of 2m and wear a face mask if social distancing of 2m cannot be maintained with other households. To aid settling in, Primary One parents only can walk their children across the large playground to the external door outside P1 – this will be permitted for the month of September.
* Parents are strongly discouraged from entering the school building. We encourage telephone contact instead. If you have a concern or query, please ring reception to arrange a telephone appointment.
* On arrival at school, all children will go to their classroom where they must immediately wash their hands. Pupils wearing facemasks will remove them – disposable facemasks will be disposed of. Reusable facemasks will be placed in a plastic bag (provided by pupils) and placed in their pocket to take home. A second facemask will be needed to wear on the school bus home. Pupils will then rewash hands.

During the School Day:

* Children will still be required to wear school uniform but on PE days, PE uniform can be worn. (This should enable more frequent washing of school uniforms.) A weather-proof coat should be worn each day. All belongings must be clearly labelled.
* No schoolbags will be needed initially and pupils must not bring in personal items from home. Pupils from P2-7 should bring a wipeable pencil case to school that contains stationery (pens, pencils, rubbers, markers etc…). This stationery should be brought in on the first day and will remain in school to avoid cross-contamination. P1 stationery will be provided in school. Children will be encouraged not to share these resources.
* Lunch boxes will not be allowed – lunches should be brought in plastic bags that can be disposed of. Water bottles labelled with children’s names are encouraged in all classes.
* In the week beginning 24th August, no hot meals will be available so packed lunches must be provided by parents. Hot meals will be provided from 1st September. All cash sent into school must be the correct amount and must be placed in an envelope for hygiene reasons – no change can be given.
* Break times and lunchtimes will be staggered to limit pupil interaction – two classes will eat and play together at one time with social distancing encouraged (P1/2 and P2/3; P4 and P5; P6 and P7). Pupils will wash their hands regularly throughout the day and increased cleaning measures will take place.
* If any child displays COVID-19 symptoms during the day, their parent must collect them as soon as possible. Their siblings will also be sent home and COVID testing must be arranged. No homework will be issued initially to pupils – this will be kept under review.

End of the School Day:

* P1 pupils will be collected at 12.45pm at Gate 1 (beside P6 class/reception) for the month of September. P2 pupils can be collected at 2pm at Gate 1 as usual. From October on, P1 pupils will stay at school until 2pm.
* There will be a staggered home-time at 3pm for P3-7 pupils. To avoid congestion, pupils who are collected by car will line up in the small playground (beside P6) at 2.45pm. Parents must collect them promptly at this time. Parents must observe social distancing rules by queuing 2m apart at all times.
* Pupils who go home by taxi/bus will line up at 2.55pm. It is strongly recommended that they wear facemasks on school transport. All pupils will wash their hands before leaving school and we encourage that all pupils wash their hands immediately on returning home.

As previously planned, our Primary 7 pupils will return to school on Monday 24th August. They will come to school at 9.20am and remain in school until 3pm. All Primary 7 pupils are expected to attend school for four days that week from Monday 24th August to Thursday 27th August. A packed lunch must be sent with pupils. On Thursday 27th August, there will be a half day and pupils can be collected at 1pm. It has not yet been confirmed whether school transport will operate on these dates. Friday 28th August is a Staff Training day and Monday 31st August is a bank holiday therefore pupils will be off school.

All other classes from P2 –P6 will start school on Thursday 27th August. This will be a half-day finishing at 1pm and it will provide the opportunity for these pupils to see their classrooms and meet the teachers, therefore easing their return to school full-time on Tuesday 1st September. There will be no hot meals available that day. Pupils will be off on Friday 28th August and Monday 31st August.

Primary 1 pupils will also have the opportunity to meet their teacher Miss Kealey on Wednesday 26th August. Each parent and child have been given a half hour time slot to visit the school, meet the teacher and become familiar with the classroom surroundings. Three families will be present at one time in the Primary 1 classroom. Primary 1 will then have a staggered intake from Tuesday 1st September.

If anyone has concerns about a child who is vulnerable or who is living with someone who is vulnerable, please contact the school for advice and support.

I appreciate that all this information may seem overwhelming – please be reassured that we have your children’s health and well-being at the centre of all that we do and we are really looking forward to getting them back in the classrooms, having fun and learning together again!

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

*Mrs Mary Redmond*

Principal