18th August 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian,

**RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance**

We are currently working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

**Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -**

***Increasing Separation*.** This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Furniture that is not necessary will be taken out. Each teacher will arrange the room to ensure there is as little contact as possible between children.

Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom.

***Decreasing Interaction***. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be marked routes for various classes to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground.

Infants will be **Room 1** – and will come and go through **Door 1.( Door nearest Infant Room)**

First and second – **Room 2** – and will use D**oor 2** (Door nearest staffroom and office)

3rd and 4th – **Room 3** – will use the D**oor 3** – (Door facing the basketball court.)

5th and 6th – **Room 4** and will use D**oor 4** – ( Door nearest the boys’ toilets.)

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents asked to collect them from the school.

Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

**School Times :-**

Because we can’t have the ‘Before Schools Club’ and to accommodate working parents we have decided to alter the opening and closing time at our school.

**Classes will now begin at 9.00am and children will go home at 2.40p.m. ( Infants at 1.40p.m ).**

**Doors to enter school will open at 8.45 a.m – please don’t arrive before this.**

On the first week Junior infants will go home at 12.00 and 1.40 from then on. Infants will be collected from the gate by their teacher in the morning and left to the gate by their teacher after school.

**Requisites** :- Every pupil in school will need **2 pencil cases** – one to leave in school and one for home. As well as the usual items children will need their own scissors, pritt stick and colouring pencils and crayons. They will not be permitted to share items.

Hygiene is so important. Whatever day your child is doing P.E., and wearing their School Tracksuit, would be the day to wash the uniform.

Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

There will be further details in the coming days.

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Cathaoirleach, An Bhóird Bainistíochta Príomhoide