



Fearann an Chaisleáin,
Baile Brigín,
Co. Átha Cliath.
Rphost:oifig@gsbhailebrigin.ie
01/8416036.

A chairde,

Introduction:

I am writing to you today to inform you of the procedures and routines that we are putting in place to help ensure the safe reopening of our school on 31/8/20. We, as a staff and board, are really looking forward to returning to school and to meet with all of our students again. We are aware also that many families may have concerns regarding the return to school and we hope to lay out our plan here. Our updated COVID-19 Risk Assessment will be ratified at our Board of Management meeting on Tuesday evening and will be available on the school website for all to view on Wednesday. This will be the most comprehensive document available and will lay out procedures for most scenarios within the school. This will continue to be a live document and will be updated as things arise.

I would like to highlight that some of the practices that we must now introduce are counter-intuitive to how we normally run our school, with massive reduction in interpersonal contact. However, in order to ensure the safe reopening of the school and ensuring that our school can remain open, we ask that all families adhere to the procedures outlined. Schools have been, as we are acutely aware, closed since the 12/3/20 and we are very eager to return. In order to do this, staff, parental and student cooperation in all aspects is vital. We are aware that it is not possible to guarantee that infection can be prevented when dealing with 500 people, however we hope that by everyone working together that we will minimize risk.

Physical Distancing (PD):

We are currently working on our physical distancing in a practical and sensible way. Physical distancing will be achieved in two ways:

Increasing Separation: this will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise PD. 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 small group of children (~6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in their bubble or classroom. Teachers are aware of the potential stress for children regarding pods and will make every effort to ensure that there are friends in each pod. All excess furniture is being removed from classrooms at the moment.

Social distancing as laid out per the Department's guidelines will be implemented in the classrooms. Furniture is being arranged to adhere to the 1m between pods and students (for older students).

Decreasing Interaction: this will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be specific doors for bubbles to enter and exit. Yards will be split in 2 and 2 bubbles will be in each yard, increasing the amount of yards in use eg One yard for 1st class; split in 2 and each class will have a side of the yard. Teachers will be assigned groups to supervise, which will reduce amount of interaction with different members of staff. Unfortunately, we will not be able to provide the yard equipment at present during yard time. Bubbles will enter and exit school in accordance to plan laid out to ensure decreased interaction.

Hand Hygiene & Respiratory etiquette:

The importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette cannot be highlighted enough. We would ask all parents to ensure that their children know the correct procedures for washing hands and what to do when they sneeze or cough: when coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water. Below are the measures put in place to promote hand hygiene etc.

- We would ask that all children to wash their hands before leaving the house in the morning
- There are hand-sanitisers outside the entrance of every classroom and inside the doors.
- Teachers will continually talk about this topic.
- On arrival in the class, children will hang their coats on their chairs and, in their pod, they will go to their assigned hand-washing area.
- All children will wash hands on arrival, after using the toilet, after sneezing or coughing, before they eat, when they come in from yard and before and after using the PE hall. They will also wash hands if their hands are dirty. While there will be sufficient hand sanitiser and soap available in school, some children may feel more comfortable with their own and if so, we would suggest a small bottle and clear instruction from home on when to use it.

Return to School:

Under no circumstances is a parent to bring a child to school if -

- the child is exhibiting any symptoms of Covid 19-
 - Cough - this can be any kind of cough, usually dry but not always
 - Fever - high temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
 - Shortness of Breath
 - Breathing Difficulties
 - Lack of smell.

(please note that these are not the only symptoms of COVID-19 and they do not need to exhibit them all. Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at:-

<https://www.2hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

- the child has a temperature, is sneezing, coughing, who has been vomiting or has diahorrea.
- a child has returned from a county not on the Green List in the 14 days prior to August 31st, they are not to attend school. If a child visits a country not on the Green list after the beginning of the school year, they must not attend school for 14 days.
- If your child has been abroad in a country on the Green list, we would ask you to inform the school.
- If the child has been in contact with any family member and or other person who has Covid.
- If your child becomes unwell during the day, you will be contacted and your child must be collected. The protocol within the school for dealing with suspected cases will be available for you to view on the COVID-19 Risk Assessment, which will be available to view on the school website on Wednesday.

Drop off and Collection Routines:

As a school we appreciate the importance of gathering in the morning and the afternoon during drop-off and pick-up. We understand the importance of the social interactions between parents and guardians, however, unfortunately, in order to open the school safely and to try to ensure that it will remain open, we will have to put new procedures in place to decrease interactions as much as possible. We appreciate your support as we try to safely reopen our school building. We would ask all parents and guardians to familiarize yourselves with our new routines and to discuss them with your child regularly before school reopens. This will be new for many of our students and they may need reassurances from you, as parents, that these are to ensure that everyone remains safe. We recognise that it may be difficult at the beginning to get used to them and that some glitches may appear that we will have to work out. It will take time at the beginning to embed the practices and to work out any kinks, and we do ask for your patience as we do so.

- **General rules:**
 - ***Under no circumstances may students or parents be on the school grounds before 8.45***
 - Adults must socially distance from each other: there will be markings at the designated areas
 - No adult exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 is allowed onto the campus.
 - One adult per family on campus (* see below)
 - Parents will not be able to have meetings with staff members at drop-off or collections; they can only take place by prior arrangement (*see below)
 - No parents/visitors are allowed into school building unless it has been arranged via phone/email. Where possible, all meetings/ communications will be done via email or phone. If a face to face meeting is required, it must be pre-arranged. There is a sign-in log, which must be filled in. At least 2m social –distancing must be adhered to and if this is not possible, masks must be worn. Hand-sanitisers must be used.
 - No parent/guardian may bring their child into the school building. All children must enter by themselves.
 - In order to ensure the least amount of interaction, there will be some staggering of home times, however, this will be kept to a minimum.
 - A parent of Junior & Senior Infants and 1st class may accompany their child to their line, but must remain socially distant from other adults (see markings on ground). A parent of children in 2nd class may accompany their child to their line, but must leave. Parents of children in 3rd-6th may not come onto the campus. * parents of children with special educational needs in these classes may contact the school to make alternative arrangements, if necessary.
 - Teachers will be at the different drop off/collection points at the beginning to guide everyone.
 - Parents are not to stand in the lines with children.
 - There will be little to no parking on the school grounds due to construction work taking place in Ardgillan.

- **Junior Infants**
 - We are aware that for infants, especially Junior Infants that the first day of primary school is a huge mile-stone and very exciting. However, unfortunately, we will not be able to let parents enter the school building.
 - Rang Cliodhna will line up at the back door and Rang Gráinne will line up in front of the Junior Infant class window beside the grass. There will be markings for adults to socially distance.
 - We would recommend that you discuss and prepare your child now for going into school by themselves.
 - Rang Gráinne will be collected from the back door at 1.30
 - Rang Cliodhna will be collected from the front door at 1.25. Parents are to line up in front of the offices.

- **Senior Infants:**

- Rang Lára will line up beside the bike rack, with parents socially distancing in front of building and will enter the front door. They will be collected from the front door at 1.30. Parents to line up outside Senior Infant windows while Junior Infants are collected
 - Rang Neasa: Will line up in the morning in front of the Senior Infant classes. Parents must SD in accordance to markings. They will be collected from the side door at 1.30
 - **Rang 1:**
 - Both classes to line up at side door. Ciara to the right when looking at door and Maria to the left.
 - Parents from Ciara's class can socially distance beside the windows, parents from Maria's can do so near the wall.
 - Both classes are to be collected at the front door at 2.20
 - Rang Maria will exit at 2.20, parents to line up in front of offices and Ciara's will follow at 2.25, parents to line up in front of Senior Infant classes
 - **Rang 2:**
 - Both classes will line up on the Quad.
 - Rang Ciara will line up beside the gate
 - Rang Emma will line up beside the grass
 - Parents may drop children to line, but must leave immediately
 - The teachers will collect from Quad and walk up the hill beside Wavin and enter through the front door of the school. They will go to their rooms passing Senior Infants and 1st.
 - They will be collected from the back door at 2.20
 - Rang Ciara will exit first. Parents can socially distance on tarmac and grass. Parents from Rang Emma should socially distance on the Quad.
- Rang 3:**
- Both classes will line up in the 1st yard beside the Quad.
 - Rang Chillín beside the entrance gate, socially distancing 1m apart (spots on ground).
 - Rang Shinéad will line up beside the fence on the other side of the yard.
 - Teachers will collect from yard and walk up the hill beside the grass.
 - They will enter through the "old" doors at back of school. Rang Chillín will go first, then Rang Shinéad.
 - Teacher will ensure that there is adequate space before entering.
 - Rang 3 will leave through the back door. They will exit, Rang Sinéad first, then Rang Cillín. They will walk down the hill beside Wavin.
 - Parents will wait outside school to collect. Parents cannot come onto the campus for collection (* note children with SEN to contact school)
- **Rang 4:**
 - Rang **Aoife** will line up, socially distancing at 1m in the middle of the 1st yard.

- They will be collected by teacher and walked up beside the hall and enter the side doors.
 - Rang **Laura** will line up beside the gate in the middle yard.
 - They will walk up (after 3rd class, ensuring adequate space between the 2 4th classes on entry).
 - Rang Laura will wait until Rang Sinéad have left the yard
 - Rang 4 will exit through the side door at 2.20. Rang Laura will leave at 2.20, followed by Rang Aoife at 2.25. They will walk down beside the hall.
- **Rang 5:**
 - Rang **Dearbhla** will line up, socially distancing beside the fence at the far side of the middle yard.
 - Rang **Maria** will line up, socially distancing 1m apart on far side of the last yard.
 - The teachers will collect them and walk them up beside the hall and enter by the side door.
 - Teachers will ensure that classes are distancing from each other.
 - Both classes will leave at 2.30. Rang Maria first and then Rang Dearbhla. Dearbhla will wait until Rang Maria have left the building.
 - They will walk down the hill
- **Rang 6:**
 - Rang **Dheirdre** will line up in the middle of the middle yard.
 - Rang **Eoin** will line up beside the gate in the last yard. T
 - he teachers will collect them, walk them up the hill and will enter the building via the back of the school.
 - They will exit at 2.30 through the main door.
 - Rang Eoin will go first and walk down the hill beside Wavin, followed by Rang dheirdre
- **Late Arrivals:**
 - Children arriving late will have to enter by the front of the building and sign in.
 - R3-6 will have to sign in themselves
 - Junior Infants -2nd class will have to be signed in by a parent, however the parent will not be able to accompany child to classroom.
 - If a parent is signing in, they must adhere to guidelines and wear a mask.

Cleaning:

Now more than ever keeping our school clean is vital to ensuring that we reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in our school. To this end, we will be increasing the amount of cleaning done in the school. Sanitising of all touchable surfaces will take place now daily, to include chairs/tables/door handles/rails etc. All equipment will be cleaned weekly also.

Each child will be assigned a storage box with a lid when they return to school. All of the child's books/pencil cases etc will be stored in this box. The boxes will be stored in accordance to pod and only the child will handle their box.

We would encourage children to have access to any stationary they need at home, as we would ask that they leave their pencil case in school. This is to reduce risk. As you are aware, we have increased the number of books in use this year to reduce the amount of sharing of resources.

Ipads will be cleaned between use.

PPE/Face-masks:

It is currently not recommended that children under 13 wear face masks as a mitigation strategy against the transmission of the coronavirus. However, we are aware that this may cause stress or anxiety for some children. If this is the case for your child, they may wear but we would ask that parents teach them how to use them properly.

Staff will use PPE as per guidelines.

Clubs etc:

There will be no clubs for the month of September. A decision around their safe operation will be taken then.

There will be no dancing for the duration of COVID

As previously stated, our Risk Assessment will be available on the school website from Wednesday 19/8/20. This will cover all of our procedures regarding COVID-19 and return to school. Our Response Plan is also available on our website.

If you have any concerns or questions or queries regarding the return to school, please feel free to contact the school via email and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Wishing you all an enjoyable few weeks before our return to school,

Le meas

Múinteoir Clodagh.

