

Logistical Arrangements and Guidelines for the Reopening St. Mary's N.S.



(14th August 2020)

The Board of Management of St. Marys N.S. in collaboration with the staff of the school intend to implement the following measures in order to facilitate the safe and orderly return of pupils and reopening of our school.

Transport- Bus Eireann are responsible for the transportation of pupils to and from school and will issue further guidance to those travelling on school buses either directly or through their media outlets.

- Pupils must sanitise when getting on and off the bus
- Pupils must sit with a family member, or a person from their specific pod or a pupil from their class bubble.
- At the moment, there is no requirement for **primary** pupils to wear masks or face coverings on school transport.
- Pupils are encouraged, in so far as it is possible and safe for them to do so, to walk or cycle to school.
- Parents who drive their pupils to school are asked to use all drop off points available in the village including Lisheen Park, the church car park, the shop and the Community Centre car park.

Arrival to School in the Morning

- Arrival time for all pupils will continue as before from 8.45 to 9.00am
- Pupils may enter at any of the 5 entry points to the school premises:
 - church gate entrance
 - main gates
 - pedestrian gates (x2)
 - gate nearest the community centre

These gates will all be held open each morning in order to minimise touch points.

- Pupils should avoid congregating at these areas in advance of the school premises opening.
- Parents and visitors will **not** be allowed to enter the school grounds at any time without prior permission of the Principal.
- Pupils will enter the school building at a specific entry point (to be advised) and must go straight to their classroom and sit at their table.

Dismissal

- Junior infants will go home at 12 midday for the first 2 weeks up to and including Friday, 11th September. From Monday, 14th September they will finish at 1.40pm
- Senior infants will leave at 1.40pm each day
- First class will leave at 1.40pm for the first number 2 weeks up to and including Friday, 11th September. From Monday, 14th September they will then finish at 2.40pm
- Pupils in 2nd class and those travelling by bus will be released from class at 2.35pm
- Pupils from 3rd class to 6th will be released from class at 2.40pm
- Parents waiting to receive their children should observe the 2m social distancing rule at all time.

Suspected Cases of COVID-19

- No child, teacher or parent should attend school if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building which will be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.
- The person presenting with symptoms will be taken to the isolation room and will be provided with a mask.
- A staff member will care for the pupil until collected and will also wear a face covering.
- The suspected case will be transported home by a parent/guardian as soon as possible.
- The isolation area and work areas involved will be thoroughly cleaned.
- The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case.

Visitors to Schools

- Necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to **essential purposes** and limited to those who have attained prior approval by the Principal.
- A detailed sign in log of those entering the school must be completed. The school should maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts.

Physical Distancing

Increase separation & Decrease interaction

- A distance of 1 metre will be maintained between desks or between individual pupils
- This recommendation will not apply to pupils from junior infants to second class.
- Staff will maintain a 2m distance from each other and a minimum of 1m from pupils.
- Where staff cannot maintain the 2m social distancing rule masks or face coverings will be used.
- There are some situations such as intimate care settings or the administration of First Aid where staff will be required to be closer than 1m. In these situations, appropriate PPE will be worn by the staff member including masks, gloves and possibly aprons (depending on the circumstances).
- Pupils will be arranged into class bubbles and 'Pods' within those class bubbles.

- There should be at least 1m distance between individual Pods.
- Flexibility in implementing of measures will be required.
- In so far as is practical, pupils and teaching staff will be consistently in the same Class Bubbles.
- Each class grouping will only mix with their own class, including at playtime breaks.
- There will be 2 playtime breaks –one for the junior school and one for the senior school and the pupils will be advised of these on their return
- Sharing educational material between Pods will be avoided/minimised.
- Schools will reconfigure class spaces to maximize physical distancing and all rooms will be cleared of any unnecessary furniture etc.

Hand Hygiene

- Each class is equipped with 3 wash hand basins and one hand sanitiser. There are also hand sanitisers available at all entrances to the school building as well as in all public areas.
- The message of the importance of good hand hygiene will be emphasised to all pupils and an awareness programme will continue to highlight this. Signage in all classes, toilets and throughout the school will reinforce this message.
- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitizer:
 - On arrival at school
 - Before eating or drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After a cough or sneeze
 - After playing outdoors
 - When hands are physically dirty
- Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities will be provided in all toilets.
- We are currently examining the possibility of installing of warm running water to the classrooms and in the interim a soap that emulsifies easily will be used.
- Care will be taken to ensure that pupils do not ingest these. Young children should not have independent use of alcohol gel.

Cleaning Regimes

- The Department of Education has provided additional funding to support the enhanced cleaning required.
- The school will be cleaned thoroughly every day and this will be supplemented by the caretaking service during the school day who will ensure that all high touch surface areas are regularly sanitised.
- Regular collection of used waste tissues and rubbish will be carried out by the caretaker.
- All toys will be cleaned on a regular basis.
- All shared equipment will be cleaned between uses.

Equipment and Resources

- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Pupils will only need to bring their lunchbox, their coat and any miscellaneous items requested on the booklist to school - all other materials will be provided by the school for the moment.
- Sharing educational materials between Pods will be avoided/minimized and shared equipment will be cleaned between uses.
- Pupils will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item
- Pupils will be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies and these will be provided by the school in so far as is practical and affordable.
- Shared electronic devices will be cleaned between use.
- Minimise sports equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses
- Play dough where used will be for individual use only.

Library and Books

- The main library facility will remain closed to pupils for the moment.
- Each class teacher will have their own class library supplies.
- All library books and rental books will have a wipeable plastic covering that can easily be sanitised.

Curriculum Guidance

- One of the biggest challenges facing the staff in September is ensuring that pupils settle happily back into school, that all in the school community stay safe and well and that pupils can pick up and progress in their learning, experiencing as full and as enjoyable a curriculum as possible.
- Getting to know each child will be especially important in identifying appropriate starting points for teaching and learning.
- Teachers will take time initially to assess pupils' needs, and to re-teach, revise, and consolidate previous learning before introducing new learning.
- Particular attention will be given to personal hygiene and managing feelings.
- It is not envisaged that standardised tests of Reading and Mathematics will be administered on the return to school.
- Teachers will continue to provide a broad range of active learning experiences for all pupils. These include play-based learning, inquiry-based learning, talk and discussion, use of digital technologies, and learning in the environment.
- The staff will be prioritizing certain aspects of the curriculum including SPHE, PE, Language and Mathematics.
- Mandatory aspects of SPHE such as Stay Safe will be taught early in the year.

The Outdoor Environment

- At St. Marys N.S., we are fortunate to have extensive play areas and grounds at the pupils' disposal.
- The staff will be planning for more frequent use of the outdoor space across the curriculum in order to help children to adhere to social distancing, engage in physical activity, and build their sense of wellness and contentment.

- The staff will place emphasise strands on Athletics or Outdoor and Adventure Activities with particular focus on the strand units of running, jumping, throwing and orienteering.
- We will be promoting physical activity and movement of a non-contact nature.

Distance Learning

- Explicit provision will be made for contingency curriculum planning for a situation in which there might be an unexpected period of school closure.
- We will continue to build on the experience of using digital technology during the school closure period to support contingency arrangements in the event that pupils need to continue their learning in a distance learning environment.
- Seesaw and Aladdin Connect will be considered if this situation should the need arise again.

Staff Returning to Work

- The BOM has ratified a COVID-19 policy for St. Marys NS, Knockbridge, which you will also find attached.
- All staff will undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building.
- Each staff member must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form 3 days prior to the 27th August

Homework

- In order to minimise the movement of books, materials and equipment, most if not all school copies and textbooks will remain in school.
- Pupils will only need to bring themselves, their lunch and their coat to school.
- The staff will give consideration to the best delivery of a model of homework with an online model being one consideration.
- There may be no homework for pupils in the initial phase of the return to school as the staff focus on pupils' wellbeing, assessment and social integration.

Uniforms

- There is no mention of uniforms (or clothing in general) in the guidance documents and so we expect pupils to wear the school uniform in line with school policy as usual with their PE tracksuit on the appropriate day.

Swimming

- No swimming lessons are scheduled until further notice.

Temperature Checks

- The school currently does not intend to conduct regular or random temperature checks on pupils or staff.
- Pupils who present as unwell will have their temperature taken using an electronic device.
- It is important to remember that pupils who display any of the symptoms of Covid 19 should not be sent to school as they will be treated as a suspected case and must be sent home immediately under HSE advice.

Sacraments

- The Sacraments of Confirmation, First Confession and Holy Communion are all scheduled to take place in the next 4/5 weeks and are at an advanced stage of planning. Parents will be updated by email closer to the time of each blessing.
- Due to social distancing requirements and availability of space in the church family numbers permitted to attend will be limited.