

St. Joseph's N. S.



every child, every chance, every day

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Back-to-school - Reopening Plan.

- This plan has been formulated in accordance in line with public health advice and the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills for the Reopening of Schools. It is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day.
- In formulating this plan the school is endeavouring to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community; children, parents and staff.

- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

Assumptions

- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system - no class has any contact with other classes.

Within each classroom, children will work in a pod of four to six children.

- The school is split into two groups with each group having different break times and lunch times.
- We ask that all parents wash and sanitise their children's hands and take their temperature before leaving home. Hand sanitiser in school will be available at school entrances and in all class and support rooms, from elbow operated dispensers. A hand washing and sanitising regime will be put in place in the classroom.
- Staff Rooms – strict social distancing measures will be in place and an additional, temporary staff room area will be in use.
- These will also be a comprehensive once a day cleaning schedule in place.

School times:

- School will begin for all classes at 9.20am. School will be open from 9.00am. **Please do not arrive before this time. If your child arrives by bus, the bus should not drop your child before 9.00am.**
- All children will enter the school when they arrive through their designated entrance. There will be no congregating of children in the yard in the mornings.
- For the first two weeks, Junior Infants will finish school at 12.00pm. Senior Infants, First and Second Classes will finish at 2pm. After this time, Junior and Senior infants will finish at 2pm and First and Second Class will finish at 3pm.

Entrance & Exit Points for Specific Classes

- Parents are asked to drop their children at their specific drop off point. This will be assigned to each class on Aladdin. When the children are familiar with this, they may be dropped at the school gate closest to this entrance door. Each entrance door will be numbered and will have a picture of an animal to ensure that they are easily recognisable for the children.
- **All adults entering the school grounds to leave children to their entrance door must wear a face covering. One adult only per family is permitted to enter the school grounds.**
- Children will be met by school staff at the drop off point where they will sanitise their hands at the entrance and go straight to their classroom. There they will be met by their teacher and get ready for school work.
- **No adults will be allowed enter the school building except by a prior appointment**

Yard times

The following will be the times the pupils will access the yard at break-times:

- For yard time, in-school-groups will be constituted of (i) Junior infants and Senior infants and (ii) First classes and Second classes.
- Junior Infant and Senior Infant classes will have their breaks at the same times and First Classes and Second Classes will have their breaks at the same times. Children will remain in their class bubbles during break and lunch times.

End of School Day

- Adults, who are collecting their children from school at 2pm or 3pm, should wait at the collection point where children were dropped in the morning. Each class will be escorted to their designated exit by their class teacher at staggered intervals
- First and Second class children will also be escorted to the collection point. Those children who go home on the bus will make their way to the bus independently. Other children who walk home alone or have other arrangements should let the school know of these arrangements in writing, so the class teacher will allow them to leave the school grounds . All other children will remain at the collection point under the supervision of the teacher until a parent arrives.

- **Please maintain adequate social distance and wear a face covering when dropping and collecting your children**

Communication with School

Messages for teachers can be sent by a note sent in with your child, on Aladdin or by phoning the school office. If you require a meeting with the teacher, this will be by appointment only and you will be asked to phone when you are outside the building.

Collection of Children during the School Day:

If you or a representative has to collect your child or children during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- When you arrive at the school, call at the office.
- Your child will be brought from their class by a member of staff.
- You will be asked to sign your child out.
- Again, no adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so. All adults entering the building must wear a face covering.

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

1. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
2. The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. Our isolation area is a specially build pod in the prefab behind the school.
3. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child

and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.

4. A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms, if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.

5. An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.

6. The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.

7. The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.

8. If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member or the designated emergency contact, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.

9. If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.

10. Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed.

The HSE take responsibility in this area, not the school, and subsequent communication and decisions are taken by the HSE will be carried out by the management of the school in accordance to HSE advice and guidelines. Decisions re closure of the school is made by the HSE.

Children who should not attend school

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19

- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with parents. This guidance is in relation to students who are themselves deemed to be at very high risk if they contract Covid-19 only.

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified
- Public health advice will be sought and followed

Personal Equipment

- It is requested that all pupils will bring their own pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment and that these items are left in school on the first day. It may be necessary to have some pencils and colours at home as your child's pencil case will not go home in their schoolbag. No toys should be brought from home.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.
- By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared, including equipment used for structured activities and play. Children will sanitise their hands before using any of this equipment and the toys/equipment will be sanitised after use.

- All children will require their own water bottle that will need to be labelled and washed every evening. Children availing of school lunch should bring in a lunchbox to put their leftover lunch in and this should be washed each evening.

Uniform:

Children will wear the school uniform as usual

Yard

Each class will be given their own yard area to play in during yard times. Children will only be in the company of others from their own class group at these times.

Learning Support

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another and the children.

- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

PPE

All school staff will wear masks and or visors.

Also, staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class.

If a substitute teacher is not available a SET teacher will step in.

There will be students from colleges of education completing school placement on

site who may also be called upon. All are fully vetted and are close to completing their degrees. Their teaching will be classroom-teacher-led if possible.

Homework

There will be no homework for the first few weeks, as the children settle back into school. Books sent home after this time will be held for 72 hours before being given to another child.

Lead Worker Representative

St. Joseph's N.S. will appoint a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) and a Deputy LWR.

The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and will be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

Duties for the LWR will include the following:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of staff
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;

Hygiene and Cleaning

- Pupil and staff handwashing will be prioritised. Pupils will be regularly reminded of proper technique.
- Paper towel dispensers are installed at all hand washing stations.
- Pupils will hand sanitise before eating.
- Additional hand sanitisers have been installed throughout school building
- The cleaning routine in St. Joseph's N.S. will be enhanced by daily sanitising of the school building through use of a fogging machine- a disinfectant atomiser.
- Additional cleaning will focus on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Staff will thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

PE

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment will be confined to individual class groupings.

I thank you for taking the time to read this plan. Be assured that all our actions will be guided by common sense and the priority of keeping everyone safe.

Linda Dowling and Staff.

