



Plan for Reopening St Patrick's National School

Key Points of Information and Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care and to ensure that the school can reopen safely for all pupils.
- No additional staffing has been provided to the school.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- 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 minimize the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility, goodwill and shared responsibility 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. Each individual class is a bubble.
- Within each class from 3rd to 6th class, the children will be divided into further groups known as pods, with a minimum of 1 metre being maintained between pods. Children from different pods can play and interact together in the yard.
- The school is split into 2 groups with staggered opening and finishing times (to ease car park congestion) and each group will have different break times and lunch times.
- The day will include two 20 minute breaks.
- Hand sanitisers will be available at all entry points and in all class, support rooms and the PE hall.



❖ **Junior infants to Second Class**

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children in Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their class bubble.

❖ **Third to sixth Class**

Children from 3rd to 6th Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per pod. As far as possible each pod will be 1 metre from the next Pod.

Teacher's professional judgment and knowledge of their class will be utilised in this area. We cannot accept special requests as there is a variety of different factors that go in to assigning pods (bus pupils, after school, educational, etc).

Arrival at School

The car park has been identified as a high risk area. Punctuality and cooperation with this is vital. The school will be split into two groups to allow us to bring children safely into the building. The children will go directly to their rooms and will not be lining up in the yard at morning time. To reduce traffic congestion the following procedures are in place:

- **For the first two weeks only Junior and Senior Infants will start school at 9.am. We would really appreciate it if parents could hold these children in their cars if their older siblings have gone in to class. First time parents are requested not to approach the car park until 8.50am. Their entry point will be via the steps at the PE Hall and parents can bring the children to the timber gate only.**
- We have increased the running time in the mornings to facilitate drop offs and we have incorporated this around the two bus times. **For this to work properly parents must arrive during their allocated time**

Group A 8.30am to 8.40am	Group B 8.40am to 8.50am
Bus 1 children plus the pupils from 5 th and 6 th classes and their siblings	Bus 2 children and all other pupils

- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building.
- Parents are asked to 'drop and go'. **It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their children get safely onto the school grounds from the car park.** Children will go to their classroom on arrival. Teachers will be in the classrooms.
- The Principal, Special Education teacher and SNA's will be outside and inside the building to guide the children to their classrooms and to remind them to sanitise their hands.
- Parents will also be required to maintain their social distance from other parents at drop off and collection times.



- Entry points for all other classes in the morning will be via the reception door and the furthest entrance (after room 1)

End of School Day

***1.30pm – Junior and Senior Infants go home.** The Junior Infants will have a settling in period of 10 school days where they will go home earlier (11.50am) but once this is completed they will go home at 1.30pm with Senior Infants.

Group A 2.20pm to 2.30pm	Group B 2.30pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All bus pupils will be brought out first.• Pupils from 5th & 6th Classes and their siblings will then be brought to the yard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All remaining pupils in the school will be brought to the yard.

The classes will be lined up and brought out to the car park entrance in a controlled way for immediate collection. Please ensure social distancing at this time. The bus bay will be vacated so this will create more space to facilitate social distancing.

❖ Communication with Teachers

While Parent/Teacher communication is very important it will have to change somewhat in this 'new norm'. **Appointments** have to be made to visit the school for essential purposes. A contact tracing log will need to be filled out for each visit. This does not mean that you will be unable to communicate with your child's teacher. If you wish to contact your child's teacher please do so via Aladdin Connect.

❖ Collection of Children during the School Day

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should call the office beforehand so the child can be ready.
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out. Children will only be released to a person over 16 years of age.
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.
- If a child is signed out to go to an appointment they cannot return to school that day and must wait until the following day.



❖ **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene.

- On arrival at school
- Before eating and drinking
- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When their hands are physically dirty
- When they cough or sneeze

❖ **Hygiene and Cleaning**

In accordance with the Departmental guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

The BOM have taken on a new cleaning company with 2 cleaners assigned to our school to help us implement these measures. We have invested in a fogging machine to facilitate extra cleaning and quick sanitisation.

❖ **Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

- We hope to see all our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any COVID-19 Symptoms.
<http://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>.
- Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.
- A designated isolation area has been created.
- If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:
- The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 metres will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.
- If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. **To help us in this regard, Mums and Dads are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.**
- Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.
- A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic.
- The staff member/child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces or objects.
- If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.



- Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect.
- The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.
- The HSE will inform any staff/parent's who have come into close contact with a diagnosis of COVID-19 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 and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.
- It is important to remember that any one of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell make that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

❖ **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.
- 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 instruction of the HSE should be followed.

(The Department have to issue further specific guidance to schools around these areas)

❖ **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 professionals not to attend school
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad from a county not on the Green list 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 with medical reasons 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. Communication with parents will be via Aladdin Connect. A doctor's cert may be required to confirm the above.

❖ **Personal Equipment**

In so far as possible, it is requested that children from 1st to 6th class bring their own pens, pencils, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid sharing of equipment. **Children are asked not to bring fluffy pencil cases to school as they may need to be wiped down. We are asking that children should have a separate pencil cases - one for home and one for school.**

It is further requested that items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

❖ **Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment for structured activities, the Sensory Room and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes and or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

❖ **Homework**

In the interests of wellbeing for all (pupil, parents and staff) we have decided not to give written homework for the month of September. This means the children will only need their lunchbox in their bag coming to school each day. There may be some revision items (spellings, sight words etc) sent via Aladdin Connect from the class teacher during this period. We will review, along with other procedures at a September staff meeting.

❖ **Lunches**

Parents and guardians must make sure that children bring a lunch to school each day. Children must not share food or drinks with other children. **Children will be asked to bring home all waste and packaging** with them to avoid unnecessary trips to the bin. **Please make sure all lunch boxes are clearly labelled.**

❖ **Drink Bottles**

Please make sure your child's drink bottle is clearly labelled to avoid another child using them by mistake.

❖ **Boxes**

The children will need a hard plastic box on the first day for storing things in the classroom. Please ensure that these are no bigger than 30cm by 25cm by 15cm as this size will fit on their seats to ensure table tops are cleaned down every evening.



❖ **Uniforms/Tracksuits**

In relation to school uniforms, the DES has issued no guidance on this. There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day. The Board of Management has decided that we will follow our usual practice with regards to uniforms. Uniforms should be worn every day, except on PE days, or when otherwise requested by teachers. It is likely that the class will have 2 timetabled PE days this year. This will allow us to alternate days between uniforms and tracksuits. Junior/Senior Infants will wear tracksuit only as it is more practical for their needs.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities.** Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn later on at the GAA club, in shops, during other after-school activities, etc.

❖ **Break/Lunchtime**

Children will be going outside to play as much as possible. If there is light rain we will be trying to get out and play. **Please ensure your child has a good waterproof raincoat.** This is in order to ventilate the rooms as much as possible during the day. There will be 2 x 20 minutes breaks. Pupils will eat their lunch in their classrooms before going outside.

Each bubble of 3 classes will have access to the yard during their allotted break times. The yard will be divided into 3 sections, one for each bubble. Each class must remain in their allotted section for that day and this will be rotated. Yards will be supervised by class teachers, learning support teachers and SNAS's working within that bubble in so far as possible.

❖ **First Aid/Toilets on break**

Teachers on yard duty will have First Aid packs and appropriate PPE with them to help them tend to the pupils and minimize children coming into the school. Children will be requested to use the toilet before break/lunch time as we need to minimize entrance into the building and ventilate the rooms.

❖ **PPE**

Appropriate PPE (visor/mask) will be worn by staff in the classroom. Visors and/or face masks will be provided to all staff. Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks and disposable gown.

Pupils are not required to wear face coverings however they may do so if preferred. Teachers will not be ensuring that children wear face coverings or that they wear them correctly.



❖ **Teaching and Learning**

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be in a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

❖ **Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers**

In keeping with our Special Education Policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in class support and withdrawal. For the month of September it will be predominantly in class support given to the pupils as we adjust to the new measures. The provision of support will be organized to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of a bubble where possible.

- 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.
- Where children from 3rd to 6th class receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

❖ **Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that a 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, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, a special education teacher will cover the class or it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If the latter is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

❖ **Staffroom**

Staff breaks will be staggered so that a physical distance of 2 metres can be maintained. Staff meetings will be held remotely or in the PE Hall to facilitate physical distancing.

❖ **Photocopying**

Staff members who use the photocopier should clean it down after use with wipes provided.



❖ **Extra - Curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities will not take place in the first term. This will reviewed at a later date. Cumann na mBunscol have also informed schools that there will be no competitions in the first term.

This document will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.