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**Principal: Mr Tomás Mc Kee**



27<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

## **Reference: Beginning of School Year 2021/22**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope that you are all keeping well and had an enjoyable summer.


I write to you regarding our proposed arrangements for this school year in response to the recent guidance issued from the Department of Education.


Firstly, I would like to thank all the parents who completed our end of year survey. We were obviously very pleased with the many positive responses that we received and I on behalf of all staff would like to thank you for your kind comments.


After consulting the Department of Education's most recent COVID guidance we have agreed to continue with most of the arrangements that were in place at the end of the last school year. The children will continue to learn and play in bubbles; break and dinner times will be split and home times will be staggered. Breakfast and 123 Clubs will operate and we plan to introduce some afterschool activities in a few weeks. All adults will be encouraged to socially distance on and around school grounds and we continue to ask that you wear a face covering whilst on school grounds. We feel it is in all our interests to continue with the arrangements that worked so well last year in reducing the COVID transmission rates in our school. It is vitally important that we continue to be vigilant in light of the current infections rates.

The Department of Education's guidance outlines the latest isolation periods which have been updated from 16<sup>th</sup> August. Children will only be required to isolate if they have tested positive for COVID19 or are displaying COVID symptoms. Close contact isolation periods have now changed and children are now asked to take a PCR test if they have been identified as a close contact. If they test negative and are not displaying any COVID symptoms they may return to school. I have attached a summary of this information which outlines current isolation periods and a flowchart has also been posted on our website, regarding close contacts for your information (further information is available on: [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)). It will be very important that we continue to work in partnership to ensure that we respond appropriately to positive cases and close contacts.


Please read the following information regarding the children returning to school next Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> August:


 **All P2-P7 children return to school on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August.** Unfortunately there will be **no buses and dinners will not be available**. Children will need to bring a packed lunch. Sorry for any inconvenience caused.


 **Breakfast and 123 Clubs will be available from Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August.** Breakfast Club is £2 per child daily and 123 Club is £3. Children will be supervised in their classrooms.


 **Buses and dinners will be available from Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September** for all children. Children who have been registered with the Education Authority for 2021/22 school year will be entitled to receive Free School Meals from 1<sup>st</sup> September. Parents can register their children for Free School Meals via


an online application on the EA website. Applications for EA transport should also be made via the EA website. Children are encouraged to wear a face covering whilst travelling on school transport.

 **Reception and Primary One** children will come into school for their induction sessions from the start of September and commence school in small groups from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

 **Primary Three will be taught by both Mrs Comiskey and Mr Mc Cann this year.** Mrs Comiskey will teach Primary Three on Monday and Friday. Mr Mc Cann will teach the class on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Both Mrs Comiskey and Mr Mc Cann will welcome the children back to school on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August.

 We are also delighted to welcome Mrs Arlene Oliver, Mrs Rosie Trainor and Mrs Aoife Donaghy to our school team this year.

 There will be no homework next week although children will be expected to wear their full school uniform, including plain black footwear. We will focus on some Literacy, Numeracy, Topic and Health and Well-being activities to ensure the children make a smooth transition back to school.

 Transfer Class for Primary 7 children will commence on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September from 3-4.15pm. It will be on every Tuesday and Thursday until the middle of November.

Children should come to school with a school bag as normal although they will not require a pencil case as we will supply all necessary classroom equipment. All clothing and items brought into school should be clearly labelled, including lunch boxes and bottles. Children are allowed to bring their own healthy snack for break time: fruit, pancake, sandwich, crackers with butter/cheese (Not permitted: jam, chocolate, Nutella, peanut butter, sugary spreads etc.). Please remember that we are a **nut free zone**.

Outside play areas will be coned off so that all classes can remain outside at the beginning of the school day. On wet mornings children should make their way to their classroom via the classroom external doors. On entering their classrooms children will wash their hands before engaging in learning activities. Regular hand washing will continue throughout the school day. Children will receive dinner/lunch in their classrooms and break and dinner times will be staggered. We will continue to use the play park for break times and equipment will be sanitised before and after use.

We would urge all parents to socially distance when dropping off children in the mornings. Please consider parking at the community centre and walking with your child(ren) down to the school. Only parents of R/P1 and P2 children should be entering school grounds. If you wish to speak to a teacher you will need to phone the school to arrange an appointment. Face masks **should** be worn by parents/visitors in the school grounds and **must** be worn for face to face meetings. Teachers may request to conduct meetings via phone to reduce face to face contact.

**Collections arrangements** will be as follows: **Reception** children should be collected from the main entrance at 12 noon until Halloween. After Halloween it will be 1pm. **P1** will be ready for collection **@1.55pm** from the main door; **P2 @2pm** from the rear classroom door (*parents/carers will have to walk around the back of the school to collect children in P2*) and P3 children will be collected from the area outside the P3 room or door if wet until 2.05pm. Please walk on the left when in the school grounds and be punctual. Thank you. **At 2.55pm P4 and P5** children will be brought by their teachers to the area outside the school kitchen. They will be followed by **P6 and P7** children **at 3pm**. Children can walk to meet their parents who should wait outside the school grounds (*please don't gather in crowds*) or they should walk to an agreed meeting point or home. A note must be sent into school (*this can be done via email*) informing the school if your child/children has/have permission to walk to the Community Centre or home. P4 children will only be allowed to walk home if they are with an older sibling. **P1-P3** children are not permitted to walk home alone. Children travelling by bus will be escorted on to their bus as usual although they should be wearing a face covering. Please ensure your child knows how they are going home. If a child is uncertain if they are to get the bus we will have no other option but to keep them at school until an adult collects them.

Please remember to drive, park safely and be respectful of local private property at drop off and collection times. Thank you.

Homework will begin from 6<sup>th</sup> September. We will increase homework gradually over the course of September to assist children and parents with the transition back into school routine. It is very important that children are reminded to wash their hands regularly at home, come to school with a tissue in their pocket as we promote, 'catch it, bin it, kill it' and they know how to cough and sneeze into their elbow. There is a responsibility on us all to do all that we can to ensure that we reduce virus transmission in our school.

It is vitally important that if your child(ren) displays any **symptoms of COVID19** (*continuous cough, high temperature, loss of smell/taste*) they **MUST** not attend school or travel on school transport. If a child displays COVID19 symptoms in school we will isolate the child in a designated area (child will be supervised by an adult) and contact parents. You must then follow PHA guidance. Please ensure that your contact details are up to date and you have plans in place to deal with such an event. Hopefully this does not occur but it is better to be prepared.

As referred to earlier school uniform will be compulsory for children returning to school. All children must wear plain black footwear (shoes or runners) and plain navy trousers/tracksuit bottoms or skirts/pinafores permitted in school. Girls should wear navy tights or navy knee high socks. **Children may wear plain navy shorts or blue checked summer dress with white socks in August/September** and in the third term. Tracksuit bottoms with logos and coloured trainers will not be permitted. Hair accessories should be kept to a minimum and only stud earrings are allowed. *Please ensure that your child wears full school uniform and that all items are properly labelled.*

Information, advice and online application forms for free school meals, school transport and uniform grants for 2021/22 are available on the Education Authority website ([www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)). It is very important that you register your child(ren) for free school meals even if they take lunch as the school receives extra funding from the Department of Education for children who are eligible for free school meals.

Please contact the school if you have any further queries regarding children returning to school. Thank you.

As we begin another school year we do so with much excitement but also with some apprehension. We hope the children will be able to experience a full year of face to face teaching and create lots of joyful memories.

Take care and all the best,

*Tomás Mc Kee*

**Tomás Mc Kee**

**Principal**

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

**WE ALL  
MUST DO IT  
TO GET  
THROUGH IT**



KEEP  
DISTANCE



WEAR FACE  
COVERING



WASH  
HANDS



FRESH  
AIR

## Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)

If you have:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature), or;
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual), or;
- anosmia - the loss or a change in your normal sense of smell (it can also affect your sense of taste)

Everyone in your house must stay at home.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms

If you have [symptoms of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), however mild, you should begin self-isolating and book a PCR test. These are widely available and are free.

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): testing](#)

You should continue to isolate until the result of the test is available. If the result is positive you should continue to self-isolate for 10 full days after the symptoms started.

You can end self-isolation 10 days after your symptoms started, as long as you do not still have a high temperature. If you still have a high temperature, you need to continue to self-isolate until your temperature has returned to normal for 48 hours.

You do not need to continue self-isolating for more than 10 days if you only have a cough or loss of sense of smell/ taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

More information is available at:

- [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)

Close contacts of COVID-19

If you're a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, self-isolation and testing requirements will depend on whether you're fully vaccinated, your age and where you work.

A close contact can be:

- anyone who lives in the same household as someone with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19

OR

- anyone who has had any of the following types of contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 with a PCR test:
  - face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre
  - skin-to-skin physical contact for any length of time
  - been within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
  - been within two metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)
  - travelled in the same vehicle or a plane

### Young people (aged five to 17)

Young people (aged five to 17) who are not fully vaccinated and are identified as a close contacts should self-isolate and book a PCR test as soon as possible.

If the PCR test is negative, they can end their self-isolation and should arrange to take another PCR test eight days after the last known contact.

If the young person who is a close contact develops symptoms at any time they should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test, even if the earlier PCR tests were negative.

If any of the PCR tests are positive, this means they have the infection and they should self-isolate for 10 days, in line with advice for confirmed cases.

### Children under the age of five

Children under the age of five will be encouraged, but not required, to take a PCR test. They do not need to isolate unless they develop symptoms or have a positive PCR result.

Close contacts with positive PCR test in the past 90 days

If you're a close contact who is fully vaccinated, or under the age of 18, and have had a positive PCR test within 90 days of the date of contact, you do not need to isolate and do not need to book tests at day two and day eight. However, if you develop symptoms, you should isolate and book a PCR.