



## Re: Arrangements for the reopening of St. Fintan's NS in light of the Covid-19 pandemic

11<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents,

We hope everybody is keeping safe and well and that all in the St. Fintan's National School community have been enjoying the summer holidays. We are looking forward to reopening the school for children on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

As you will know, recently the Department of Education and Skills published a number of documents outlining required actions to facilitate the reopening of schools, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. All of the provisions in these documents are being implemented in St. Fintan's NS. These provisions were developed in line with public health advice and the engagement of relevant stakeholders. Below are the key changes to practice which St. Fintan's NS is required to make in order to reopen safely. The following arrangements hold until review by the St. Fintan's NS Board of Management before October midterm break:

- **The Board of Management of St. Fintan's NS has ratified a Covid-19 Policy Statement** for the school.
- **To avoid large crowds in the yard, pupils and parents will no longer be permitted to gather in the yard / on school grounds before school.** Pupils must enter the building through the doors at the top of their corridor. These doors will be open from 8.40am. Children must not arrive to the yard before 8.40am. Upon entering the school, pupils will be met by staff who will provide hand sanitiser for each child. If your child has a skin allergy / intolerance, please let us know in writing and arrangements will be made for such children to apply their own sanitiser upon entry to school each day. Class teachers will be in classes from 8.40am. Class will begin at 8.50am as normal.
- **Parents / visitors must not enter the school building beyond reception under any circumstances without prior appointment.** Parents / visitors entering the building by prior arrangement will be required to sign a visitors' register. We respectfully ask that parents do not come within 10 metres of the children's entry / exit points if bringing children to school. These areas must not be clogged up and must be kept clear for the safe entry of the children. Where possible, we encourage children to walk or cycle to school safely.
- **Pupils in all classes will sit in pods of approximately 6 pupils.** These pods will hold until review at a later date and will only be subject to change in very exceptional circumstances. For the first 7 school days, all pupils will be provided with colour coded sticker name tags to help them identify and remember the pod they are in. From 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class, desks will be arranged to facilitate social distancing as required.
- **Pupil break times will now be staggered, with all pupils having 2 twenty minute yard breaks daily.** Pupils will only play with their own class groups in pre-marked zones during these play times.

- **Use of the school and class libraries will be minimised.** Pupils may however bring one book from home for free reading.
- **We ask that pupils bring a small personal hygiene pack to school daily,** containing hand sanitizer, a face cloth sized towel for hand drying and tissues.
- **We respectfully ask that pupils do not bring in non-school personal belongings** (eg. toys / elaborate stationery). Classrooms will be decluttered to facilitate daily enhanced cleaning so therefore, unfortunately, pupil access to some resources may be limited at this time.
- **Pupils will continue to wear their school uniform / school tracksuit in school.**
- **In consultation with our cleaning contractors, enhanced daily cleaning procedures will be in place within the school.** Hand sanitizer stations will be located throughout the school, including in all classrooms. The school has also acquired an ultra violet sanitizer machine which will be in use daily.
- Again to avoid large crowds in the yard in the afternoons, **first and second class pupils will be released from school daily at 2.20pm, third and fourth class will be released at 2.25pm and fifth and sixth class pupils will be released at 2.30pm.** We ask that you inform childminders / childcare facilities of these new arrangements as necessary.
- **To avoid crossover of class groups and pods, all after school activities are postponed** pending review of procedures by the Board of Management before October midterm break. We ask again that you inform childminders / childcare facilities of these new arrangements as necessary.
- **If your child has been abroad within 14 days of the school reopening, you must inform the school by email** and be prepared for your child to quarantine for up to 14 days if necessary, in line with Government requirements.
- For the safety of all who use the school, no child may come to school if sick in any way. **Any child who staff consider to be sick in any way will be promptly brought to the isolation room and parents will be contacted to collect their child immediately.** If necessary, in such circumstances the Health Service Executive may provide further guidance to the school and / or relevant parents. **The school's decision in such cases is final.** All contact details provided for pupils must be up to date before school reopens and must be kept up to date if they change. All children must have at least one contact available at all times.
- **A new school phone and email account strictly for use in relation to serious Covid-19 concerns will be acquired.** Contact details for these will be communicated to parents in due course.
- **Pupils may wear a visor / face covering in school if parents or the child wishes.** It is not however the responsibility of school staff to enforce pupil wearing of masks.

We understand that some of the arrangements listed above may prove difficult for some in our school community. However, these procedures are required and will be in place to ensure the safety of all children and staff in the St. Fintan's NS school community. Further guidance may be provided in advance of school reopening.

Best wishes,

***Mr. Ciarán Caulfield, Principal***