



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

21st August 2020

Dear Parents,

We hope everybody in our school community is keeping safe and well. We are very much looking forward to reopening our school on August 27th and we hope your child is looking forward to starting school again too. As you will have seen from our letter issued on August 11th, school will be somewhat different upon reopening, in light of the ongoing pandemic situation. Despite the necessary changes to practices required for safety reasons, we are confident that upon reopening St. Fintan's NS will still be the happy, supportive and nurturing school it always has been.

***Best wishes,
Mr. Ciarán Caulfield, Principal***

Except for some amendments as shown below, the provisions outlined in our letter of August 11th still hold. Please however note the following further information:

- **Regarding “pods”:** As previously communicated, pupils in all classes will sit in pods of approximately 6 pupils. As always, teachers will decide class seating arrangements and hence pods. In line with General Data Protection Regulations, we are not permitted to publish lists of pods with pupil names. Likewise, school management does not consider it feasible to seek from parents and then take account of all possible prior contacts children may have in forming pods. Our classroom arrangements will be tailored to meet the many and diverse needs of all of the class pupils and will comply with Department of Education requirements. Only at breaktimes when outdoors in the school yard, pupils will be able to play with their full class group (class hub).
- **Start times:** To limit the likelihood of large numbers of pupils coming into school at the same time, we are extending the time period during which pupils can come to school in the mornings. Teachers will be in classrooms from 8.40am and pupils can arrive any time from 8.40am up to 9am. Lessons will start at 9am.
- **Sanitizer:** Parents of pupils bringing hand sanitizer to school are asked to remind children that sanitizer is only for application to hands. It should of course not be consumed and it is not a toy. Also, it must be kept away from eyes as it can cause damage. Teachers will teach children this message too.
- **Travel:** Please note the following information provided to all schools in advance of reopening: *Reminder to anyone attending school who has travelled abroad: Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone. It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of ‘normal precautions’ (“green”), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school staff, parents and children*

or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. Therefore, under such circumstances, do not send your child to school until 14 days have passed from their return date.

- **Code of Behaviour:** If any child / children deliberately invade the personal space of others, cough, threaten or spit with an intent to cause harm (physical or emotional), this will be considered an incident of “gross misbehaviour” which may lead to a prompt suspension. The school’s decision in such scenarios is final.
- **In the unfortunate event of a confirmed case of COVID-19:** The school will be guided in its actions by the Health Service Executive. This may involve part or full closure. In such unfortunate circumstances, distance learning will be provided. More information on this will be provided in due course if required.
- **Supporting pupils at “very high risk” of COVID-19:** Where relevant public health guidelines indicate that a child is “at very high risk” (see www.hse.ie for further information), St. Fintan’s NS will provide distance learning for such children.
- **Homework:** There will be no homework for the month of September, to avoid cross contamination.
- **Assessment of pupil work:** In so far as is possible, again to avoid cross contamination, children will “self correct” their class work. This is a valid form of assessment recognised by the Department of Education known as “self assessment”. It is regularly used in classrooms throughout Ireland.
- **Pupil school books and materials:** All pupils will be given a wipeable plastic box with lid on their first day of school. All of their books and materials (eg. pencil cases etc.) will be kept in these until further notice. Pupils should bring their lunch daily in a single, wipeable plastic container. Unfortunately, the school office cannot in the current circumstances be used for delivery of late lunches / school bags / sports equipment. With social distancing requirements and new required class layouts, extra non-school baggage should not be brought in.
- **Meetings:** Pending review before October midterm break, teacher-parent discussions will take place through the school phone, by prior arrangement.
- **The theme for our first month back with pupils will be wellbeing, friendship and positivity.**
- **Drops offs and pick ups:** If driving to school for drop off or pick ups, we respectfully ask that you park as far away as possible from the school. If your child is capable of safely walking, scooting or cycling to school themselves please allow them to do so.
- **For everybody’s safety, parents may NOT drive into school grounds** at any time before, during or after the school day up to 4pm. Such cars will be reported to the Gardaí.

Further information will be issued from the school in advance of reopening next week.