

Monkstown Nursery School
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New School Day Restart for Monkstown Nursery School

Dear Parents & Carers

Following the long period of school closure due to the Covid: 19 pandemic, it is now appropriate to start planning to ensure that the education provision we provide at Monkstown Nursery is both safe and effective. This nationwide educational restart has been led by medical and scientific evidence which will ensure that school reopening is done in a manner which is safe for our pupils, our staff and wider society.

All schools within Northern Ireland have recently been issued guidance for the Restart and New School Day by the Department of Education. As a school we are very eager to have your **child in nursery every day** when they join us at the beginning of next term. Alongside this desire, we have a list of recommendations to consider as outlined by the Education Minister; these include the need to plan for the reduction of footfall within the school building, staggered start times, one way systems, the need for the children to be organised within a protective bubble, a greater use of our outdoor area, the need for more frequent cleaning practices and weekly deeper cleaning sessions.

To ensure the safety of our children, staff and families, we have made some minor operational changes which we feel will minimise disruption to you and maximise the children's educational opportunities.

Protective Bubbles

It is acknowledged that children, particularly very young children, cannot reasonably be expected to remain apart from each other during the day, and this is not conducive to play-based learning and development. At Monkstown, we feel that we can best manage risks by keeping children in small groups and trying, as far as possible, to keep the same children and staff members together from day to day. After a period of settling in it is envisaged that each whole class will become a protective bubble and that two adults will work with this group of children. According to the DE advice, we do not need to implement social distancing between the children within a group but should make every effort to minimise physical interaction between different groups, and distancing should be maintained between groups. Adults, including those within groups, should implement social distancing.

Part time Settling In

The children will initially work in a bubble of thirteen until Friday 4 September and will attend daily for a one-hour session. From 7-11 September children will then be brought together forming a whole class bubble and will attend for 1 ½ hours. They will all attend for two hours from 14-18 September. All children in the part time room will be in school for 2½ hours (Monday-Thursday) from 21 September. To reduce footfall inside the school grounds and to ensure that we can clean the equipment fully between sessions, the start time for the morning session will be **8:45am** and their session will end at **11:15am** (Monday-Thursday). The afternoon session will commence at **12:30pm and finish at 3.00pm** (Monday-Thursday). (See separate arrangements below for Fridays).

Full time Settling In

The children will initially work in a bubble of thirteen until Friday 4 September and will attend daily for a one-hour session. These sessions will run from 9am-10am and 12:00noon-1pm. From 7-11 September, children will then be brought together forming a whole class bubble and will attend for 1½ hours, commencing at 9am. They will all attend for two hours from 14-18 September. All children in the full-time room will be in school for 2½ hours from 21 September, we will then begin to introduce the children to the dinner routine in small groups with some children staying to 12:30pm each day. During the week beginning 28 September all children will finish at 12:30pm and full days will commence in October.

Friday Deep Clean

We will be using a system where we assign resources both inside and out to specific bubbles. These will be removed at the end of each session, wiped down and stored. Frequently touched areas including table tops, chairs, coat pegs, handles will be cleaned with recommended disinfectant solutions. Bathrooms including toilets and basins will be cleaned between sessions by staff working within each classroom.

In line with our risk assessment which focuses on children's safety, it is imperative that the resources are given a deeper clean on a weekly basis before being quarantined and then redistributed. To facilitate this, once all children are attending nursery for their full allocated session all classes will finish ½ hour earlier each Friday. On Fridays, the morning class will finish at 10.45am, the afternoon class will finish at 2.30 pm and the full-time class will finish at 1.00 pm. This temporary measure ensures we can allow your children to attend nursery every day and the staff are consistently able to apply these new regimes within each classroom.

One way systems and drop off arrangements

We have assigned each class a specific location for drop off and a one-way system will be in place. We would encourage a swift drop off; with only one adult in attendance.

For children attending the part time morning session, these children will be arriving in school for 8:45am. The children will be using the foyer to access the classroom and Ms Acheson and Mrs Crowe will be meeting the children and their parents at the front door of the school.

For children attending the fulltime room drop off time is 9am. Parents are asked to enter the school grounds with their child via the bottom metal gate and walk with their child to meet Mrs Wilson and Mrs Owen at the front of the veranda. Parents are asked to line up and wait until they are called forward by the teacher. We would ask you to stay within the visual markers and to make sure your child is kept close to you. There will be signage to remind you of the arrangements and to keep appropriate social distancing.

Our afternoon children will be accessing the school building via the wooden gate at 12:30pm. Parents are asked to line up and wait until they are called forward by Ms Acheson. We would ask you to stay within the visual markers and to make sure your child is kept close to you. There will be signage to remind you of the arrangements and to keep appropriate social distancing.

Snack

We will be continuing to provide your child with a healthy snack. These will be placed in sealed containers for your child to choose from. Whilst we are implementing the Covid guidance, the children will not be buttering their own bread, and this will be done in advance.

Handwashing

Regular and thorough attention to hygiene is essential to deter spread of the virus. Children will be washing their hands thoroughly on arrival at school– this must be a repeated throughout the school day. Children will wash hands upon entering the setting, prior to eating food, after engaging in outdoor play. Where hand washing facilities are not immediately accessible, hand sanitizer will be made available (e.g. at the entrance to school). We would encourage you to practise appropriate handwashing at home with your child.

Hopefully, this highlights some of the measures we as a school are taking to ensure the safety of our children. A full copy of our School Restart Policy will be available on our school website. We would encourage you to familiarise yourself with this. If you have any further questions or require clarification on anything, please ask.

Finally, it is important to note the situation continues to be ever-changing and fluid and whilst these plans have been put in place, they are subject to review should the educational advice change.

Thank you for your support.

Mrs Wilson & the Nursery Team

