

## Return to School Response Plan

There are a number of things to be taken into account as we prepare children for the return to school. Whilst safety procedures in relation to Covid19 must be brought to their attention, we also want to ensure that children don't experience anxiety about their return. It will make the transition easier for children if you talk to them about the changes to the school day mentioned below, but we also appeal to parents to reassure children that school is still going to be a normal, fun place to be. The main focus upon our return will be on our pupil's well being and ensuring that they settle back following the prolonged period away from their routine.

Although hygiene routines and exit and entry routes have changed, we aim for the school day to run as normally as possible, so that the children get as much as possible of the learning experience that we took for granted six months ago. I ask all parents to read the details below in full and to discuss them in an age-appropriate way with their children.

As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be needed to ensure the plan can be implemented. It is essential that we all work together to keep the school running as smoothly as possible.

### **Timetable for the school day**

**9:10 School opens to receive children**

**9:30 Formal lessons begin**

**11:00- 11:20 Small Break**

**12:40- 1:00 Lunch**

**2:00 Infant Classes finish** (Junior Infants will finish at 12:00 until Fri 11th) exit via main Gate

**2:50 6th class finish** (exit via the main gate)

**2:55 1st & 2nd class finish** (exit via the main gate)

**3:00 3rd, 4th & 5th finish** (3rd & 4th exit via small gate, 5th exit via the main gate)

**If a child in 6th has siblings in other classes they will leave at 2:50 also, the same applies at 2:55 with siblings of children in 1st & 2nd class.**

**Please don't feel pressure to be in for 9:10 if you are anxious about crowds, drop the children off at 9:20 when it will be quieter. Children can be dropped to school anytime between 9:10 and 9:30**

**By spreading out the arrival procedures and finishing times this should alleviate gatherings at the gates. Parents are asked to only come to the gate at the required time and to socially distance themselves. This should also alleviate the car parking issues hopefully**

### **Arrival at school**

Children will not be allowed on the school premises until 9:10 when the Principal/Deputy Principal will come out to the yard. Please do not let your child out of the car until they are permitted onto the school property.

Children will be going straight to their classroom on arrival

3rd, 4th & 5th class will enter via the small gate, turn left and walk around the new extension, 3rd & 4th will enter the school via the entrance at the new extension, 5th class will enter the school via the back entrance/exit.

Junior Infants, Senior Infants, and 1st class will enter via the main gate and enter the school via the main entrance.

2nd and 6th will enter via the main gate and walk around the school and enter school via the back entrance/exit.

### **Illness**

**It is of paramount importance that no child attend school if they feel unwell, are off form or show symptoms of a cough/cold/fever/loss of smell or taste, because this prevention is our first line of defence against a Covid19 outbreak in our school.**

## **Hygiene and Cleaning**

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, at the door of each classroom. Small pump dispensers are available in each classroom also. Antibacterial soap (which emulsifies at low temperature) and water is available in all classrooms and toilets. Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message. At a minimum the pupils will:

- Sanitise hands before entering the classroom
- Wash hands before eating
- Sanitise hands before going to yard
- Sanitise hands before entering the classroom after yard (wash hands if visibly dirty)
- Sanitise hands before leaving classroom

Children are not required to provide their own hand sanitiser.

In accordance with the DES 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/armrests, communal eating areas, sink, and toilet facilities. All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain the cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day. Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.

Staff will maintain a regular cleaning routine of all resources and materials that will be used by different pods or classes. Where necessary items will be isolated for up to 72hrs prior to being used by a different pod/class

## **Changes to Classroom Layouts**

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping that stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the

children go home at the end of the school day. This includes break time and no whole school activities such as assemblies will take place.

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble. They will however still be in pods (small groups of 4-6 children)

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be distanced in so far as is practicable, or in pods 1m apart in all rooms. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

In 3rd and 4th class, the children will be grouped into pods which will be a minimum 1m distanced from each other. Children from 3rd-6th will be required to stay in their pods and keep socially distant from other pods.

Doors and windows will remain open to allow for ventilation throughout the day.

### **Learning Support**

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. For September, the focus will be primarily on in-class support and the pastoral care of our pupils. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of the minimum amount of class bubbles.

- 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 receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group. Only pupils from the same class bubble may be withdrawn together for SET purposes
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending

Staff members (particularly Learning Support Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between classrooms but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed

## Yard Time

Each classroom will have its own designated yard section which they must play within at break times. Pupils from the same class can play freely with each other but physical contact will be kept to a minimum where possible.



As you can see from the picture above Junior Infants & Senior Infants (Zone 2) and 1st & 2nd class (Zone 1) will still be in their usual yard areas. 3rd and 4th class will be in Zone 3, which is also their usual area. The only real change needed is that the basketball court will be split in two. 5th class will be in Zone 4 while the 6th class will be in Zone 5.

On good days 3rd/4th/5th & 6th will be using the pitch, again in 3 distinct and separate Zones. On these days 1st and 2nd will move around to the bigger back yard with Infants remaining in their usual spot.

### **Lunches**

Pupils will be given time to eat lunch in class as usual. Children will not be permitted to take food out on the yard. We will be asking parents to remind pupils to eat directly from their lunch boxes, not to use the surface of the table to lay their food on. Children should be encouraged to bring items that they can open independently. Also, the sharing of food is not permitted. In line with our Healthy Eating Policy and Green School ethos, pupils will be asked to bring all items, finished and unfinished, and all wrappings home with them. Unfortunately, children will not be allowed up to refill water bottles so please ensure your child has adequate supply coming to school. Lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be washed thoroughly, inside and out each day.

### **School Uniform**

There has been no guidance to the contrary regarding the wearing of school uniforms from either the Dept of Education or the HSPC. I am aware that parents are confused on this matter. Students will wear their normal school uniform on Monday, Wednesday & Friday. The children can wear their PE uniform on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This allows parents to wash the uniform if they see fit to do so. This will apply from Monday 31st. Children will wear school uniforms on Thursday 27th and PE uniforms on Fri 28th. A reminder that the PE uniform is a plain **unbranded** navy tracksuit bottoms, grey/white polo shirt, and a plain **unbranded** navy jumper.

### **Personal Belongings**

Children will be asked to keep a pencil case with pens, pencils, eraser, sharpener, colours in the school at all times. This will avoid items being left at home. Children should have a set of these items kept at home to use for homework. The school will provide each child with their own scissors and glue stick, which are some of the most commonly shared items of stationary. Children will be required to use their own resources at all times and the sharing of equipment will not be allowed. All books and copies for each child will be kept in an individual box under the child's table

### **Shared Equipment**

Some equipment such as tablets, maths resources, etc will by necessity need to be shared among classes. Cleaning of such equipment with wipes will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

## **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 at 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.

## **Homework**

Courtnacuddy Board of Management and staff would like to thank parents for their homeschooling efforts over the past number of months. Teachers will not be assigning homework for the first 2 weeks to allow pupils, parents, and teachers to adjust to various new school routines. This will be reviewed at this date and may be extended.

## **School Payments**

Courtnacuddy NS will operate an online payment system for parents this year. We would appreciate if all school payments could be made via this online payment system. This system should be up and running in the coming weeks. Those who cannot use this method of payment can send monies in an envelope clearly labeled with the child's name and breakdown of monies.

## **PPE**

The Department of Education advises that face masks should be worn by all staff who cannot maintain a 2m social distance from pupils. The BOM is supplying all staff with disposable and reusable face masks as well as a face shield. Gloves and aprons will be provided for intimate care or first aid provision.

## **Arrangements for Parents/Guardians/Outside Visitors to the school**

As per DES guidelines, there will be no casual access to the school for anybody outside of staff and students. All visitors to the school must be essential and visits must be pre-arranged with the approval of the principal. Parents must deal with the office by phone/email, as casual access to the office can no longer be permitted. When collecting children early for appointments/if they are ill etc, please call the office to let us know that you have arrived or ring the buzzer and wait outside the front door for the child to be brought out. The adult will be asked to sign out the child as is normal practice.

Please remember to use the school office email address [courtnacuddyns@gmail.com](mailto:courtnacuddyns@gmail.com), or

phone number 053-9244284 to contact the school. Email details for class teachers will be issued when school reopens. We ask all parents to use these details with respect and to remember that these email addresses cannot be constantly monitored by teachers who are in class. Therefore, any urgent queries or issues that need to be addressed within a certain time frame should be referred to the office email address or telephone number. Any essential visitors to the school (therapists/contractors/parents for specific essential purposes) must have the prior approval of the principal to enter the school and fill in a visitor log form for contact tracing purposes.

### **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**

We love to see all of 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:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Loss of smell or taste, or distortion of taste

Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

A designated isolation area has been created in the school. 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 meters 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, parents/guardians 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 or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and 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. 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/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 instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

It is important to remember that any 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 makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.