

# Scoil Phádraig, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny.

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August 25<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Dear Parent / Guardian,

A Chairde,

I hope that this note finds you all well. We in Scoil Phádraig, look forward very much to welcoming you all back on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August. To facilitate as safe a return as is possible, several new school procedures and protocols will come into effect. **It is in everyone's interests (staff, parents and pupils) to stringently follow these guidelines to ensure that our school can open safely and can continue to operate effectively.** Your co-operation with all these measures is greatly appreciated.

## Arrival and Leaving School

- School will begin, as normal, at 9:20am and finish at 3pm (2pm for infant classes).
- Children arriving on buses will walk up from the bus park and enter their classroom.
- Junior Infants will finish at 12.30p.m for the first two days and the following 2 weeks until Friday 11<sup>th</sup> of September.
- Children being brought to school must be left at the main gate and the children will walk to their classroom.

## Procedures whilst in School

- Please note that adults will NOT be allowed into the school building during the school day. Any meetings that need to be held will be done by prior appointment or phone-call only.
- Hand sanitizers have been put up all around the school and the children will also be asked to wash their hands regularly.
- Lunch & Break times will be staggered to allow all children access the yard. Each class will be given an area and will be asked to remain in that area for the duration of the break.
- The school will be cleaned every day following government advice and checklists.
- Please ensure that every item sent to school (books, lunchboxes, drinks bottles, uniforms etc) is labelled. It is also vital that children can open lunchboxes, lunch packets, fruit etc. by themselves and can tie their own shoelaces (if not, please ensure velcro shoes are worn).
- Lunches MUST not be shared and all lunch-boxes must be cleaned thoroughly every day after use. All rubbish, uneaten lunches etc will need to be taken home by each child in lunch bag or box.
- Stationery: where possible, it is recommended that all pencil cases and stationery are left in school and your child has a second set at home for any home-based activities.
- There will be no homework for the first month of school.

## How you can help?

- Be positive with your child about the reopening even if you have concerns yourself.
- If you need to speak to your child's teacher please ring the school office on 056 7768915
- Keep yourself safe. Maintain a social distance at drop off and collection times. Wear a face covering if required.
- Please wash your child's hands before coming to school and take your child's temperature if required.

## What the children need to know?

- We cannot wait to see you back at school really soon. To keep us safe, some things will be a little different when we reopen the school. We know that you will all help to keep everyone safe.
- You must only come to school if you are feeling well. If you are not feeling well you must stay at home.
- Mams and Dads and minders are not allowed come into school this year. They will walk you to the gate or drop you off in the car at the school.
- Washing your hands is very important. Please wash them before you eat, if you sneeze/cough and when you come in from the playground. There will be hand sanitizer for you to use every time you come into your classroom to help keep your hands extra clean.
- This year we cannot share our pencils or belongings.
- Leave all toys and special things at home and only bring the thing you need for school in your bag.
- To keep you safe your class will be in a bubble. You will sit with some of your friends and you will stick together to help to keep everyone safe. You can still talk to everyone, but you may not be able to sit beside them. Each class bubble will stick together, even in the playground.

## Face-coverings

- It is a requirement that staff in primary schools wear a face-covering when a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff or children cannot be maintained.
- Children under 13 are not required to wear face coverings in primary schools.

## Dealing with illness or a suspected Covid-19 Case

- For everyone's health and safety, we have a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy in relation to illnesses and suspected cases of Covid. This is for everyone's safety.
- Staff or pupils must not attend school if they are unwell. Symptoms such as a **fever, cough (dry or otherwise), shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, loss or change to sense of taste or smell may indicate Covid-19. Other symptoms such as unusual fatigue, sore throat, aches and pains, chills, runny/stuffy nose, sneezing, vomiting and diarrhoea may also indicate that a child/staff member is developing an illness.**
- Staff/ children who have chronic illnesses or conditions with some of these symptoms must produce a doctor's letter to this effect and must notify us immediately of any changes to their baseline condition.

- A dedicated **isolation room** in the old school will be available for children or staff members who are displaying symptoms or become unwell during the school day.
- If a pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:
  - The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation room by a staff member via their designated entry/exit point. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. The staff member or pupil who is symptomatic will be required to wear a face mask (provided) until collection.
  - Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, parents and guardians are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.
  - The individual who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
  - If the individual concerned is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible. The child can be collected from the isolation area and their parent/carer will not need to go near the classroom or reception area.
  - Appropriate cleaning and disinfecting of the area will be carried out in a timely manner and in line with recommended procedures.
  - Public transport, of any kind, should not be used to travel home.
  - If the individual 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 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.

Again, I cannot over-emphasise the importance of the absolute co-operation of the entire school community (staff, parent(s)/guardian(s)/pupils) in all of these measures. They are designed to safeguard us all and to ensure that Scoil Phádraig remains a safe and happy place for your children to spend their schooldays.

Yours sincerely,

Tomás O Dowd.