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Safe return to school

COVID-19 Policy Statement
St Patrick's Boys' N.S. is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following Returning to School Safely Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- identify a worker representative to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements through the displaying of information, standardised physical distancing black/yellow tape and feet markings and yard markings.
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction/familiarisation briefing when it is provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice
- All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

Lead Worker Representative	Yvonne O'Meara
Deputy Lead Worker Representative	Ciara O'Dwyer

DES Roadmaps

https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/
https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/

Relevant Circulars for Staff

https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049_2020.pdf
https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045_2020.pdf
https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0040_2020.pdf
https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2020/08/Information-Note-0008-2020.pdf

Pupils

1. Drop off and collection times

- In the effort to limit the number of people waiting on the school grounds in the morning, children should not be dropped off until 8.35am, at which time, supervision is provided.
- A two-way system of entering and leaving the school will be clearly marked.

Morning:

- School begins at 8.50am as per usual.
- School doors will open at approximately 8.35am. Children will be asked to sanitise before entering and then make their way to their classroom. Initially, additional supervision arrangements will be in place to supervise pupils. The pupils will be asked to hang up their coats and bags and will then be shown to their seats.
- Parents are asked to 'drop and go' at either gate anytime between 8.35am and 8.50am. **Infants to 2nd class children can be escorted by parents/guardians to their designated waiting area in the morning and wait with them until the doors opened.**
- On entering the school yard, a parent must proceed immediately to their child's Line Up area (see below). Parents/guardians are not to congregate in groups or stand around chatting. Markings will be provided on the yards to facilitate 2M social distancing.
- Parents must ensure their child remains at their side at all times and that their child does not interact with other children.
- Under no circumstances are parents to linger in the yard after the child has been handed over but are to leave immediately.
- There will be a two-way system in operation for parents entering and exiting at the front entrance. Please keep to the right at all times, following the arrows. Do not stand along the pedestrian walkway as this will block others from freely entering/exiting the school.

Evening:

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes will finish at 2.25pm each day.
- 4th, 5th and 6th classes will finish at 2.30pm each day.
- Classes will be walked to their designated collection zones at the above time. Children will be released one by one as usual. Parents must leave the school grounds immediately.

Entrance and Exit Points	Number
Front right of school (by 2nd class which is now Junior Infants)	1
Front left of school (by reception)	2
Entrance on Frank Hogan's side	3
Emergency exit entrance from 4th class	4
Entrance near the back gate	5

Teacher	Class	Entrance & Exit Point	Designated waiting (if arriving before 8.35am) and collection area
Mrs O'Meara	Jun Inf (now located inside the normal entry door in the morning by the flag poles (2nd class last year)	1	**Morning and Evening:** Outside the class' window on the Junior Yard by red marked ground.
Miss O'Grady	Sen Inf	5	**Morning and Evening**: The Zone on the yard immediately beside the playground.
Mr Murray	1st Class	5	**Morning and Evening:** Middle of Junior yard. 2nd zone from the front of the school.
Mr Ryan	2nd Class	2 (Morning) 1 (Evening)	**Morning:** Senior yard (2nd class are now in a class on the senior side of the school, what was previously 4th class) Do not walk through the car park. **Evening:** By the red marked area close to the flag poles.
Miss White	3rd Class	2	**Morning:** Outside 3rd class window in play area **Evening**: Area by the ramp outside main reception extending towards the playground
Miss Lynch	4th Class	4	**Morning and Evening**: Outside side entrance on Frank Hogan's side
Miss Williams	5th Class	3	**Morning:** Drop and go at either gate **Evening:** Parent's/guardians to remain outside the gate
Mr Shanagher	6th Class	2	**Morning:** Drop and go at either gate **Evening:** Parent's/guardians to remain outside the gate

2. Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines

- 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 their Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the 'bubble' 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.
- The teachers' tables will be fitted with a screen for their added protection. Hazard tape will be used to define his/her zone within the classroom and that of the different pods.

3. Junior Infants to Second Class

- 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. We will however, do our best to separate them as far as possible.

4. Third Class to Sixth Class

- Within each class, the children will be grouped into pods which will be distanced 1 metre from the next pod.
- Excess furniture has been removed from classrooms to maximise the space available. A 20ft container has been purchased for extra storage.
- Additional storage presses will be provided in the cloakrooms to store classroom supplies.
- 4th class, have moved to last year's junior infant room. Junior infants will move to what was 2nd class and 2nd will move to last year's 4th class.

5. New Junior Infants

- Junior infant parents will be invited in to school in small groups on Wednesday the 26th for approximately 15 minutes each, to help with settling them the following day.

6. Corridors

- Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.
- We will observe the practice of keeping to the left when on the corridors.
- Signage will be provided on the corridors to ensure the safe movement of class bubbles.

7. Break times

- The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.
- Each class or bubble will not be mixing with any other class in the school yard. They will have their own zone on the yard with increased line markings and signage to prevent a crossover into another class' area.
- Walking to and from the yard will be supervised carefully with each class given a specific time to leave their class to safely enter and exit the playground.

8. Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

- Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.
- While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

9. Signage

- The school has invested in signage and ground markings which will be visible around the school premises, inside and out. The Department of Education are also providing additional signage, reminding the school community about Covid-19 prevention etiquette.

10. Doors and Windows

- Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.
- To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

- Windows should be opened when children are singing as a group, or when they are playing musical instruments. Tin whistles should not be shared between pupils.

11. Toilets

- Each class bubble will have access to their own toilet.
- A new water heater will be installed and warm water will be pumped out to all sinks. Soap will also be available.

12. Lunches

- Parents/Guardians must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.
- Please do not send food to school that he cannot manage fully himself e.g. peeling an orange, frubes etc. as they will be sent home.

13. Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.

- Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and should not share with other pupils.
- Parents are asked to cover all school books in plastic so they can be sanitised easily if necessary.
- Parents/ guardians must sanitise the books with disinfectant wipes before placing them in the child's bag on the first day. If and when books go home and back to school, parents/ guardians must sanitise the books before placing them in the child's bag. Where practical, each child must use their own books. Shared books for Graded Reading should be wiped with the disinfectant wipes by the teachers after each session.

14. Labelling of possessions

- It is important that as best we can that you label all of your son's possessions in school, particularly those that could get mixed up or previously would have been open for sharing.
- Mynametags.ie are one of a number of companies that provide very durable tags which could be used for jumpers, pencils, sharpeners/parers etc. and have shown to last.

15. Homework/school work

- There will be no homework for the first two weeks.
- The number of copies in use by pupils will be minimised to approximately 2 or 3. These will be used and corrected in rotation with best practice guidelines.

16. Uniforms/Tracksuits

- We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms and tracksuits. Uniforms should be worn every day, except on P.E. days, or when otherwise requested by teachers. They should be washed regularly.
- As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities.** Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.
- Please ensure that your child is wearing appropriate footwear that he will be able to manage himself i.e. that he can ties his laces/ use Velcro.

17. Money Collection

- An epayments system has been set up to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/Guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe in this regard. If

working online is not possible, please place the required money in an envelope with your child's name and what the payment is for written on the envelope.

18. Parent/ Teacher Meetings

- Parent/Teacher Meetings may take place via phone/ Zoom or be postponed. We will assess the situation closer to the time.
- If you need to pass on a message to a teacher, please ensure you have signed up to the Dojo messaging app. Your son's class teacher will provide further information on how to join if you haven't done so already. Due to current circumstances, messages will not be passed on at the door in the mornings.
- If there are any significant concerns that you may have, please arrange an appointment via Cliona, the school secretary, or via Dojo. Please note that the app is not to be used to pass on complaints or express concerns of any nature that would normally be done face to face.

19. 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 in 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.

20. Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School

- If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work in line with department guidelines to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.
- The majority of parents have already provided an email address at which the school can contact them to support Home Learning. Class Dojo and Google Classroom will also be employed as platforms to facilitate blended learning throughout the school. This will be especially important if the school, or parts of the school have to close due to HSE advice.

21. Speaking to your child

- Parents will be asked to educate their child, in an age appropriate way, as to the contents of this document. Teachers will reaffirm this with the children and review it regularly.

22. Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution

- If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil.
- If a substitute teacher/SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class/pupil to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. Special Education Teachers will be utilised on these occasions to substitute for the class teacher. In exceptional circumstances, where we do not have

sufficient teachers available, it may not be possible for the class/pupil to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

Staff

23. Returning to Work

- As noted staff must complete the Return to Work Form 3 days before returning to work. Where staff have underlying health conditions and are applying for Covid-leave, they must follow the DES circular 49_2020

24. Staff training

- All staff must complete the DES online training before returning to work.

25. First Aid

- This will be administered as normal but if staff are wearing gloves a fresh pair must be put on first. Visor must be worn. Gloves must be changed afterwards as per normal procedures. First Aid boxes will be available at Senior Corridor and Junior Corridor for use by teachers on supervision.

26. Yard Supervision

- A rota will be organised based on Class Bubbles and the SETs allocated to those classes.
- Class teachers - Junior Infants, Senior Infants, First and Second and SETs allocated to those classes to work together
- Class teachers - Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes and SETs allocated to those classes to work together.

27. Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

- Staff members (particularly Special Education Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.
- In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble.
    - 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.
    - The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

28. Assemblies

- These will be held in classes on zoom or on the playground for the time being.

29. Photocopying.

- Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

30. ICT

- A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley.

31. Visiting Teachers/Coaches

- The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities such as, sports coaching, Safe Cycling course, etc. will be explored. However, it is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time, for example, during Speech and Drama lessons, Cumann na mBunscol etc.

32. Substitute Teachers and SNAs

- A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online induction training.

33. Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

- Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Yard's will be timetabled for use.
- Staff members and pupils may take additional breaks outside during the school day.
- Swimming will be postponed until further notice.

34. Staffroom/staff meetings

- All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2M cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn.
- Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.
- As our staffroom is small in size, the stage will be designated as a supplementary staff room at break times. Individual tables and chair will be provided and all staff members will be asked to disinfect their area before leaving.
- Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

35. COVID-19 Related Absence Management

- COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with circular 49_2020 from the Department of Education.

36. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

- Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team.
- An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.
- The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.
- A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

37. Staff Use of PPE

- Staff members will be required to wear face coverings/visors where maintaining a 2M distance is not possible. For a limited number of staff, PPE will also be necessary due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. This might include roles such as:

    - Assisting with intimate care needs
    - Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
    - Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.
    - When staff members have to move between classrooms to support children with learning needs.
- Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

Masks

- The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings.
- The guidelines recommend that staff wear masks or face coverings where 2M physical distancing is not possible. Visors will be provided to staff members who wish to wear them.

Gloves

- There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.
- Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs or administering First Aid.
- There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

General

38. Temperature checks

- Parents are asked to check their child's temperatures before school each day and do not send children if children have a high temperature. Three Infrared thermometers have been purchased by the school. Staff, if it is needed, can check temperatures.

39. Hand Hygiene

- All members of the school community must watch this video on hand washing. https://youtu.be/IsgLivAD2FE
- 20 sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom.
- Warm water and soap is available in all the toilets, staff toilets and staff room.

- Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.
- 4 automatic dispensers will be installed at the 4 entrances. Each teacher also has a hand sanitiser on their desks.
- Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:
    - on arrival at school
    - before eating or drinking
    - after using the toilet
    - after playing outdoors
    - when their hands are physically dirty
    - when they cough or sneeze
- Any staff member moving between rooms or between children must sanitise between each transition.

40. Respiratory Hygiene

- All members of the school community will practise respiratory hygiene.
- This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.

41. Children's personal hygiene

- To promote good personal hygiene and personal responsibility, children will be asked to bring in the following in a small bag:
    - Small bottle of sanitiser
    - Wipes
    - Tissues which they can use during the day.
    - A clean face cloth in a zip lock bag.
- These will greatly help to reduce the need for movement if for example a child sneezes or before eating and will provide for a better use of resources within the school.

42. Cleaning

- 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/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- Toys and resources used in classrooms will be washed regularly. Brill Blue, anti-viral disinfectant spray will be available to staff. Once sprayed on a touched surface, it does not need to be wiped down and it is safe to be touched by others for up to 3 hours.
- The caretaker will be available for 1 hour in the middle of the day for additional cleaning duties.

43. Visitors

- Any visits to the school facility during the day should be by prior arrangement and visitors will be received at the front office. The contact tracing log will only be filled out for those entering into the building.

- In relation to drop off of forgotten items (change of clothes, lunch boxes, etc.), outside the front door will be designated as the drop off point and will not require interaction with staff. Please try not to forget things!

44. Wellbeing of the School Community

- We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:
    - A sense of safety
    - A sense of calm
    - A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
    - A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
    - A sense of hope
- Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.
- We are informed by research in this area and have drawn on many resources to help us deal with all personal situations as best we can.

    - http://www.ippn.ie/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=att_download&link_id=6264&cf_id=24
    - https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52642-supporting-the-wellbeing-of-school-communities-as-schools-reopen-guidance-for-schools/
    - www.staysafe.ie
    - www.asiam.ie
    - Friends for Life
    - How Does My Engine Run
    - Walk Tall
    - RSE

45. Illness and 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. https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html
- Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.
- A designated isolation area will be created by Mr Liddane's office in an adapted space. In the event of there being second case, the rear prefab will be used.
- The following will be available in the isolation area(s).
    - Tissues
    - Hand sanitiser
    - Disinfectant/wipes
    - Gloves/Masks
    - Waste bags
    - Bins
- 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 and that at least one adult is contactable each day.
- 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. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- 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 classroom that the person was located 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 than 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.