



## St. Brigid's NS's Plan for Re-opening the School

**“No person (child, teacher or parent) should attend an educational setting if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19”**

### **Introduction**

Please note this is a living document, which is subject to constant review and change.

This document is particular to St. Brigid's National School, Ticknevin and outlines some of the new procedures put in place for the coming year, 2020/2021.

### **Underlying Principles**

- The school has a responsibility to make effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as **co-operation**, the **flexibility and goodwill** of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

## Assumptions

- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system.
- The school is split into 3 groups.
- Classes will have two lunch breaks; 10 minutes and 30 minutes. Classes will play within a defined zone on the yard and only with children in their class bubble.
- Within each class from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods. Pupils from Junior Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> class are not required to maintain a distance of 1 metre between their peers throughout the school day, however, they will be seated in pods and for all play and group activities within the classroom they will remain in these pods and only share resources with pupils in their pod.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and in all class and support rooms
- There will be **no lining up** on yard in the mornings before school.
- No whole school activities, such as assemblies, will take place.
- The school will be cleaned following all government guidelines, advice and checklists daily.
- If a child becomes ill with any symptoms of Covid-19, they will be immediately cared for in an isolation area, located in the sensory room, where they will remain until they are collected. Children must be collected by a parent/guardian promptly. All parents/guardians are asked to ensure that their contact details are up to date.

## How can parents/guardians help?

- Practice washing hands properly, with soap, for 20 seconds. Make sure your child knows how to dry their hands thoroughly.
- Show your child how to use hand-sanitiser correctly.
- Teach your child correct cough and sneeze etiquette. Cough or sneeze, into your elbow if you do not have a tissue. Put the tissue in the bin and wash hands or sanitize.
- Make sure that your child can independently open and close their lunchbox and bottle, their coat and their shoes. Shoes with laces are not recommended for younger children.
- Take your child's temperature before coming to school each day.
- Do not send your child to school if they are feeling unwell.
- Ensure your child's hands are clean coming to school each day.
- Ensure your child brings their own lunch, pencil, colours etc to school. **We ask that each child have a separate pencil case at home.** Pencil cases will remain in individual baskets under each child's desk.
- Communicate with your child's teacher via email.
- Make payments to school via our online payment system.

- Do not allow your child to bring unnecessary personal item e.g. toys, etc to school.
- Do not loiter around the school at drop off/and/or collection time.
- All parents must adhere to drop off and collection guidelines.

## **Timetables for Arrival and Dispersal at school**

### **Arrival at school**

To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk/cycle to school where possible.

Teachers will supervise in the mornings from 8.50am. **Therefore, pupils cannot be dropped to school prior to 8.50am.**

Parents are not permitted on the school grounds due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Pupils will be greeted by a staff member on entry to the school grounds and will be directed to their classrooms.

Pupils should proceed directly to their classroom via their designated entrance point.

Junior Infants, Senior Infants & 1<sup>st</sup> Class - Exit 3 (Ms. McCabe's Classroom)

2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Class - Exit 2 (Ms. Osborne's Classroom)

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class - Exit 1 (Mr. Ryan's Classroom)

Pupils will trickle in directly to their classrooms from 8.50-9.00am each morning.

**Parents are kindly asked not to congregate at the school gate. Please lead by example and maintain the 2m social distance rule. As soon as you have dropped/collected your child we ask that you promptly return to your car and leave the school premises. Thank you for your co-operation.**

### **Pupils**

- All pupils will also follow the 2m-footprint pathway when arriving and leaving the school. It is imperative that parents and pupils adhere to the arrival and dispersal times in order to minimise the risk of the introduction of Covid-19 into our school.

### **Carpark**

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions the car parking spaces on the right hand side, in front of the mature trees, are now a set-down area. Parents are kindly requested to use this area for set down only and accompany their children to the school gate if necessary. Parents can also use the set-down area beside the footpath in the middle of the carpark. Older children may accompany younger siblings if necessary to the school gate to avoid congestion. Children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class should be encouraged to walk to the gate independently **(see appendix 1)**
- At the end of the school day parents who collect their children will park in the school car park as normal at **2.40pm (1<sup>st</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> class)**. Children will exit the school building within their class bubble.

### **Junior Infant & Senior Infant Collection routines**

Junior & Senior Infant children should be collected at 1:40pm. Parents of these pupils are asked to utilise the 2m-footprint pathway in the school car park. We ask that you line up along this pathway ensuring to stay on a 2m distance marking. The class teacher will help children to exit the school building. We ask parents not to engage the classroom teacher in conversation at this point in order to ensure that the collection process runs efficiently for these pupils. Please leave the school grounds immediately once you have collected your child. If the class teacher wishes to relay an important message to you about your child, she will endeavour to do so at the end of the school day via telephone conversation or email.

\*\* Junior Infant Pupils will follow a different timetable for the first 10 days. This will be circulated separately to parents of Junior Infant Pupils.

### **Entrances & Exits**

We ask all parents to please be mindful of children using the main gate and the side entrance and as always, exert extreme caution when driving in the school carpark.

### **Communication**

- In St. Brigid's National School we have always enjoyed open lines of communication between parents and teachers. In the coming school year, we will always endeavour to ensure that this will continue. However, in line with government directives it is imperative that we do our absolute best to minimise the number of people coming into our school other than staff and pupils. With that in mind **parents are asked not to come onto the school grounds** without prior approval by a teacher/and or principal.
- In order to ensure that our communication is effective the direct staff email addresses will remain open throughout the school term. Staff will endeavour to check school emails once during school hours but it may not be possible to respond to same during the school day. We will do our best to reply in a prompt manner when possible. We ask that you do not send notes into school with your child, but instead utilise the email system. The less materials transferring from home to school will help us to minimise the risk of allowing the virus to enter our school.
- Under no circumstances is a parent/guardian permitted to approach a member of staff.
- All teachers will supply parents with their school email address on the first day of term.
- We ask that general school queries be directed through the school office at [ticknevin@hotmail.com](mailto:ticknevin@hotmail.com)
- If you have a very important message about your child that the classroom teacher should know at the beginning of the school day, please phone the school office and our secretary will relay the message to the relevant teacher. If the message is not urgent, perhaps the most effective means of communication will be through the teacher's direct email.
- School Website. There will be a 'Covid-19 Schools Updates Area' on our website. Here, we will keep the most up to date government guidelines and our school policies and routines, which relate to Covid-19.

### **Collection of Children during the School Day**

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply (please ensure class teacher is aware that you will be collecting your child early):

- The adult should proceed to their child's classroom external doors.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff.
- The adult will then be required to sign the pupil out at exit point.
- Please remember that no adult should enter the school building unless invited to do so.

### **School Uniform**

As the most up-to-date Government guidelines indicate that there are no public health concerns with the wearing of school uniforms, St. Brigid's school uniform policy will continue to apply.

### **Materials coming from the home**

In order to minimise the risks associated with materials coming from home the vast majority of your child's belongings will remain in their individual baskets at school and will not be brought home. This will include pencil cases. Pupils will not share their personal belongings with their peers. Please ensure your child has all necessary stationery in their pencil case on the first day of school. Please label your child's stationery with their name. Children should bring in their schoolbooks and all materials on the first day of school and they will remain in the school for the foreseeable future.

Please note that there will be no homework given during the month of September. Our priority will be on helping your child to become reacquainted with their peers, to settle into our new school routines and to ensure that their well-being is prioritised. After September, homework protocols will be shared with parents as our normal homework routines may differ this year.

### **Classroom Layout**

In order to maintain social distancing/distances between pods we have reconfigured our classrooms. Many pieces of furniture have been removed to create more space.

- JI, SI and 1<sup>st</sup> class will be in the same classroom
- 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> class will now be the middle room
- 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> will move to Ms. Corcoran's old room

These changes were made to accommodate larger class numbers and to make social distancing possible. **(see appendix 1)**

## **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature (38 degrees Celsius or above)
- Cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

## **Hand Hygiene**

Hand sanitising stations have been placed in all classrooms and throughout the whole school. It is advised that pupils and staff wash their hands on the following occasions:

- 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

Water, liquid soap and paper towels are provided in all classrooms.

## **Respiratory Hygiene**

Staff and pupils need to know the importance of good respiratory measures to limit the spread of the virus.

- avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
- cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
- dispose of tissues in a covered bin

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

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures which will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms, if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.

- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents **who will then call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.**
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

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.

**Please ensure we have up to date contact details for 4 individuals where possible (this may include, parents/guardians and two others) in the event that we need to make urgent contact with you regarding your child's health.**

#### **Children who should not attend school**

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
- Children who are generally unwell.

#### **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 learning support teacher, where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with parents.

#### **Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

### **Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

### **Lunch time Yard**

Class bubbles will consist of the class levels that are within one classroom.

Therefore, Ms. McCabes's class of JI, SI & 1<sup>st</sup> are one class bubble. Within this bubble there will be smaller groups of pods. These pods will share resources and toys within the classroom with appropriate cleaning measures taken.

Ms. Osbornes's class of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> will be another class bubble. Within this bubble there will also be pods for the purpose of completing group work. It will be the teachers aim to maintain a distance of 1 metre between the pods. Resources will not be shared between pods and will be cleaned after use.

Mr. Ryan's class of 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> will be our final class bubble. Within this bubble there will also be pods for the purpose of completing group work. It will be the teachers aim to maintain a distance of 1 metre between the pods. Resources will not be shared between pods and will be cleaned after use.

Please note that teachers will not be changing the pod structure until a school holiday occurs. Pupils within the pods may be alternated after a holiday period.

During yard time, class bubbles will play together on separate areas of the yard. There will be 4 adults supervising the yard throughout both lunch breaks. Lunch times will run as normal.

### **Special Education Support**

In keeping with our Special Education Policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal.

- When working within a classroom setting the SET will maintain a 2m distance from the class teacher and SNA.
- Given the nature of the support provided by the SEN teacher, social distancing may not always be possible.
- Where children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class receive support in the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending
- It is recognised that pupils with SEN will require particular support at the time of transition back to school including supporting their well-being, reducing potential anxiety and planning learning experiences that take account of the effect of school closures on their progress.
- Please refer to the NCSE website which has wonderful resources to support transition from home back to school.

**PPE**

When a distance of 2m cannot be maintained between the teacher and pupils the teacher will wear a face covering. Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and facemasks.

**Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

**PE**

When possible, PE will take place outdoors. Equipment used during the PE lesson will be cleaned thoroughly.

**Extra-curricular Activities**

It has been agreed that no external coaches or extracurricular teachers will visit the school for the month of September. After this point the Board of Management will review this decision and parents will be kept informed.

**Induction Training**

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of this training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health, Covid-19 symptoms, what to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school and knowledge of the Covid-19 Response Plan.

**Lead Worker Representative**

A Lead Worker Representative in collaboration with the Board of Management will assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace. A Deputy Lead Worker Representative will deputise as Lead Worker Representative where the Lead Worker Representative is absent.

We understand that there is a lot of information in this document. Please read it carefully and keep it safely for future reference. This is a living document and as such is subject to change.

This is a time of change and there will be a lot of new routines for us all to learn.

We are all working towards the same goal, helping our pupils to make the transition back to school, to reconnect with their teachers and friends and to establish new routines that support their health and safety.

We are looking forward to welcoming all of our pupils back to school on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August.

## Appendix 1

### Map of Entrance/Exit Points

