

13<sup>th</sup> of August 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian, Staff Member,

### **RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance**

We hope you and your families are keeping well. This letter is the first in a series of communications that will issue regarding COVID 19 and the school building.

As you are aware, we are now hoping to re-open our school safely, in line with current guidance and recommendations.

Re-opening the school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our School Community – BoM, School Leadership, Staff, Parents and Pupils. We will all be called on to play our part in ensuring that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner which prevents the spread of the virus and allows the vital work of Teaching and Learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible.

We are currently working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

#### **Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -**

***Increasing Separation.*** This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children who will sit together and who will stay in their pod (a group of 4 to 6 pupils) while in the bubble, or classroom.

***Decreasing Interaction.*** This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be designated routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles will have different access times to the playground. We will make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

**While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated in a child appropriate manner and parents will be asked to collect them from the school. An isolation room will be prepared in school and further information will issue on this later.**

**Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List from the 16<sup>th</sup> of August onwards should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period.**

The Green List is available here; <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/>

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -  
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Parents need to make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing, and spitting. Children also need to be made aware of the correct toileting etiquette, flushing of toilets and handwashing afterwards. We would be grateful if you could emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school. Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting through the SPHE programme.

Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

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Fintan Murphy

Andrea Burke-Khan

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Cathaoirleach, An Bhóird Bainistíochta

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Príomhoide

The following websites provide further information on COVID-19 and on government advice and recommendations regarding the re-opening of schools: -

- <https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/>
- <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool/>