



Bunscoil na Toirbhirte, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.

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Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff Members,

The Board of Management and Staff of Bunscoil na Toirbhirte are looking forward to welcoming all our pupils and parents/guardians back to school for the 2020/2021 school year next Thursday, 27th of August. This is an exceptional year and our return to school will pose many challenges for our staff, pupils and families. It will take some time for all of us to get used to the 'new normal'. We will need to become familiar with the new routines and procedures designed to keep everyone in Bunscoil na Toirbhirte and their families safe and well. There will undoubtedly be some unforeseen challenges but we will constantly monitor the situation and put plans in place to deal with these as they arise. I am very satisfied that the control measures that we have arranged have put us in a good position to reopen our school in a safe fashion.

I would like to thank you for your co-operation and positivity to date, and I look forward to working with you as we assist the children and our staff in adapting to the necessary changes. We are of course conscious of the fact that our pupils have not been in school since March and that they are looking forward to coming back to school to meet their friends again and seeing the many changes that have taken place since we closed (we have quite a few surprises!). We are aware that our new pupils are beginning a school year at a challenging time and have made plans to ensure that their arrival will be as free from stress as possible.

Please find attached a Copy of our COVID 19 Response Plan, our COVID 19 Risk Assessment and our COVID 19 Policy. These were drawn up in consultation with a professional Health and Safety company, Safety Solutions Group, following a site visit. They outline in detail the many preventative measures that we as staff, pupils and parents will implement together to reduce the risk to our families and community. You are encouraged to read through these documents. It is paramount that we have everyone's full co-operation with these measures.

Summary of Preventative Measures:

- Parents will not enter the school building. Parents should make contact with the school by email or by phone. Appointment to meet teachers can be made in this way if it is deemed to be absolutely necessary.
- Parents will not enter the school grounds, except for parents of our Junior Infants, parents of new pupils and parents of pupils in Ms. Kearney's class. These parents will be permitted to enter the school grounds in the morning to drop off pupils and in the evening to collect pupils until the 4th of September. This arrangement will be reviewed at this point. These parents must practice social distancing at all times.
- All pupils will be put into bubbles (pupils in a classroom). Bubbles will not mix. All bubbles will be subdivided into pods (a smaller group of children in the same classroom). Materials will not be shared between bubbles or pods. In classrooms all pods will stay a meter apart where possible.
- All pupils will come to school and leave school on a staggered basis (see timetable below). This is to allow for social distancing. All pupils will enter/leave through designated doors. Only one class will enter/leave through a door at a time. This will ensure that classes will not meet in the corridors.
- All breaks will be staggered to allow for social distancing on yard. The yard will be divided to ensure that bubbles do not mix during break.
- On Thursday the 27th and 28th of August the school will close from 12:10 (see below). All staff will meet once pupils are left the school on these two days to review our measures and adjust these where necessary.
- All infants are advised to have at least 2 tracksuits. Pupils in 1st to 6th will wear their uniforms on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and tracksuits on Tuesday and Thursday.
- Pupils will leave a pencil case in school and have another pencil case at home. Only essential items should be brought to school.
- Pupils must be able to open their lunch boxes themselves. The food items should be easily opened (members of staff cannot assist with removing wrappers, peeling oranges etc.).
- It is paramount that parents make their children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and sneeze/cough etiquette as part of their preparation for returning to school.
- All staff and families are advised to download the COVID 19 Tracker App.
- All members of staff will be provided with a mask and a visor.
- All parents are asked to ensure that they have up to date contact details on the Aladdin system. We will need these to contact parents in the case of an emergency. Please note that parents can update these details themselves through the app.
- Staff will teach all pupils on how to wash their hands effectively.

- All in the school community will be taught the correct cough or sneeze technique e.g. into their elbow or into a tissue, which is then binned. All pupils are asked to bring their own tissues to school. After coughing or sneezing individuals wash hands without touching anything en route. Hot water, soap dispensers and paper towels are installed in all classrooms.
- All in the school community will be reminded to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. There is a wealth of signage dotted around the school to remind all in the school of safety measures.
- We have increased cleaning times. All door handles, taps and common touch surfaces are washed thoroughly with disinfectant twice daily by cleaners.
- All classroom desks and chairs are cleaned thoroughly daily with disinfectant.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are located at all entrances of both the junior and senior school buildings, in all classrooms and various other areas in the school.
- All students and staff are instructed to use hand sanitizer regularly. Signs have been erected to remind all to do so.
- Disinfectant foot mats are placed at all entrances/exits.
- Office staff will wash their hands immediately after handling deliveries to our school.
- All deliveries to school will have their surfaces cleaned with disinfectant (where possible) and then delivered to appropriate staff member.
- All Visitors must fill in a COVID 19 Screening form before entering the building.
- All members of staff have completed COVID 19 related training provided by the Department of Education prior to our return.

Pupils that are displaying any of the following symptoms must be kept at home:

- High Temperature (38°C or above)
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Breathing Difficulties
- Loss or Change to Sense of Smell or Taste.

Pupils who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period. Parents of pupils who have been abroad in the last 14 days must contact the school by email prior to their return to school.

The following arrival/leaving times apply for pupils for the 27th and the 28th of August. Staff will be at hand to show pupils to their entry/exit points. New arrival/leaving times for the remainder of the year will be sent to all parents on Friday the 28th of August.

Junior School (Junior Infants- 2nd class)

Arrival times:

9am Ms. Condon's class, Ms. Conway's class.
9.10am Ms. Fitzmaurice's class, Ms. O' Sullivan's Class, Ms. Kearney's class
9.20am Mr. Wallace's class, Ms. Cahill's Class, Ms. Linehan's class

Leaving times:

12.10pm Ms. Condon's class, Ms. Conway's class, Ms. Kearney
12.20pm Mr. Wallace's class, Ms. Cahill's Class and Ms. Linehan's class
12.30pm Ms. Fitzmaurice's class, Ms. O' Sullivan's Class

Senior School (3rd to 6th class)

Arrival times:

9am Mr. Lane's class and Ms. Feeney's class
9.10am Ms. Hyland and Ms. Niamh Walsh
9.20am Ms. Woods and Ms. O' Dwyer's class

Leaving times:

12.10pm Mr. Lane's class and Ms. Feeney's class
12.20pm Ms. Hyland and Ms. Niamh Walsh
12.30pm Ms. Woods and Ms. O' Dwyer's class

It is of vital importance that all timetables are followed by all families.

As a school community we will need to work together to rise to the challenge that lies ahead. There is nothing ideal about this virus or the above measures, in fact, I am aware that they may cause much inconvenience but these measures are necessary if we want to keep our loved ones safe. I ask all members of our school community to follow these measures and support our school in making it a safer environment for all. Please remember that all communication will be through our Aladdin App. Thank you all so much in advance.

Kind regards,

Michael McCarthy

Principal

