



Friday 27th August 2021.

Dear Parents & Guardians

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. Last week the Department of Education & Skills updated their National COVID-19 Response Plan for primary schools. We will be continuing the very important practice of hand washing and sanitising our school which kept our pupils, teachers and school community safe and well last year.

Of course, one of the key challenges we had last year was to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning. Our efforts this year will once again focus on ensuring that our school will be as safe as possible in preparation for the return of our pupils and staff. We will do everything that is practically possible to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school and we will take all the necessary steps recommended to reduce the likelihood of the spread of the virus within the school itself.

We have been holding regular staff meetings throughout the summer holidays and these are the plans which will take effect on our return:

- Junior Infants (ONLY) will return to school on Monday 30th of September from 9.30am to 12 noon. From Wednesday 1st September to Wednesday 15th September, the Junior Infant pupils' school day will finish at 12noon.
- The rest of our pupils, Senior Infants to 6th Class will return to school on Wednesday 1st September.
- In line with Dept. of Education regulations, drop off times and collection times will be staggered for the foreseeable future.
- J.I. to 2nd Class pupils will arrive at the school between 9.10am and 9.20am ONLY. They will go straight to their classroom where their teacher will be waiting to welcome them. NO adults will be permitted inside the school gates.
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- 3rd to 6th Class pupils 'drop off' time will be 9.20am. They will also proceed straight into their classrooms.
- IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN IN THE JUNIOR & SENIOR ENDS OF THE SCHOOL YOU MUST WAIT TO DROP ALL YOUR CHILDREN AT 9.20am
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- These staggered drop off times will only work if we have your support and co-operation. The French Lane will function as a one-way system ONLY. Cars will drive up the French Lane and down Gormanlough.
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- At J.I. and S.I. collection times our pupils will be brought to the gate by the class teacher. As you can understand it is vital that all children are collected on time.
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- At 2.50pm, 1st to 6th Class pupils will line up in their class group along the pitch & front wall of the school with their teacher for collection. As they see their lift arrive, they will go out to your car.
- ALL pupils MUST be collected by 3pm.
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- In line with Dept of Education regulations, please note that no pupil will be permitted to be on school premises before 9am or after 3pm.
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- All teachers, SNAs and school staff will continue to wear face masks while inside the school building
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- No adults will be permitted inside the school building.

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- Should you need to collect your child early for an appointment, your child will be brought to the front door for collection. Advance notice is necessary for any 'early' pickups.
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- Should your child experience any of the following symptoms: fever, dry cough, tiredness, aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes THEY ARE TO BE KEPT AT HOME. The school MUST be informed.
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- We will continue to follow all Dept. Of Education and HSE guidelines and if a pupil experiences any of the symptoms listed above, they will be placed in our designated isolation area with parents and guardians contacted and requested to collect the pupils as soon as possible.

Our pupils took all the changes in their stride last year – children do. Our pupils' health, happiness and well-being will be our number one priority when we open in September therefore, homework will be kept to a minimum.

On a happy & positive note, we look forward to celebrating the Confirmation on Wednesday 22nd September at 7pm in Navan and the First Holy Communion on Saturday 25th September at 10.30am in Rathkenny. These sacraments were unfortunately postponed in May.

It has, as ever, been an extremely busy summer and the last few projects are just being completed. The outside of our school building has a lovely new coat of paint and we have upgraded the sink units in the 'old' part of the school. We have also converted one of our resource rooms into a new learning support room as this year we will have 2 full time and 1 part time SEN (learning support) teachers on our staff which will be a fantastic addition. Mrs. Burke will be joined this year by Mr. Tobin and Ms. Dillon.

After many appeals and a mountain of paperwork, we were granted an additional class teacher under the Exceptional Circumstances due to Covid -19 provision. Although this is a temporary position granted for one year, it means that we will have no split classes for the forthcoming academic year. We do however have to work hard to increase our numbers for the following year so we would ask you to please spread the word about our lovely school! As you will know from previous correspondence, we need to have 199 pupils enrolled in our school on the 30th September each year to employ 8 class teachers.

We are delighted to welcome Ms. Barry (1st Class) and Mr. Kennedy (4th Class) to our staff and we know our pupils will make them feel very welcome when they start next week. We are also thrilled to announce that Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Smith are now permanent members of our staff

Teachers for the coming year:

Junior Infants: Mrs White

Senior Infants: Ms. Daly

1st Class: Ms. Barry

2nd Class: Ms. Hoey

3rd Class: Ms. Mullen

4th Class: Mr. Kennedy

5th Class: Mrs. Dillon

6th Class: Mr. Smith

SEN teachers: Mrs. Burke (Deputy Principal), Mr. Tobin, Ms. K. Dillon

SNAs: Tina Price-Lynch, Siobhan Downey

We bid a fond farewell to Gabrielle and Colm over the summer so I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome Teresa Durnin and Richard Beatty to our staff as the new secretary and caretaker.

We look forward to seeing all the smiling faces and hearing all the wonderful stories of trips and adventures when we open our doors again next week.

Take care,

Kind regards,

Rebekah Rafferty