

"To be the best we can be every day, in every way!"

ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



10, Annaghmore Coalisland, Co. Tyrone. N.I. BT71 4QZ

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3rd August 2020

RE: Revised re-opening access for pupils.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The safety, health and wellbeing of every child and member of staff will always be at the forefront of every decision taken; please also remember, that every school is different in its accommodation, staffing and class composition.

Despite the unchanged current Department of Education guidance restrictions of one metre social distancing between pupils, and two metre distancing between adults and adults and children in school, the limited physical capacity of our classrooms **we have found a way to accommodate all children 5 days a week.** We have removed everything that cannot be sat at or sat on and toys and resources that cannot be easily sanitized after use each day in efforts to maximise the space available in each room.

(I have still some hope, that changes may come from Department of Education and the Department of Finance to fund additional staff..... keep optimistic.....)

Week beginning Monday 17th August

School will reopen for STAFF ONLY

Week beginning Monday 24th August school will reopen for all pupils

all P7 pupils (in 2 sets in 2 rooms)

all P6 in Hall

all P5 in the Bottom Mobile Unit (2 rooms for use)

all P4

all P3

all P2 (using classroom and Nurture Room for small 'break-out' groups across the day for structured play and activity-based learning daily for each P2 pupil)

all P1 pupils as detailed in letter posted home.

Clubs unavailable due to current COVID19 Restrictions.

- Unfortunately, due to social distancing regulations **we cannot provide a Morning Club** as it would not be safe for anyone and the Hall will be used for teaching a class until further notice.
- Unfortunately, **we cannot offer a club from 2:00 – 3:00pm** due to the need under regulations to keep each class/bubble separate.

This is something we sincerely apologise for as it means parents relying on these provisions up until this year must make alternative arrangements until regulations change.

Buses:

We do not have any information regarding buses yet as they are independent of the school.

Dinners:

We do not have any information regarding how free school meals will be catered for at present; this is an Education Authority responsibility in conjunction with School Meals Kitchen.

Arrival Times for start of school day:-

It is solely due to the building and its age, that we basically have 2 doors in Main Building but thankfully, we have individual access to each of the Modular classrooms outside.

Under current guidance, however, we must re-establish and stagger arrival times for each group/set/bubble to ensure social distancing for everyone, especially between adults at the gates of the school. To this end, staff in each class will go to the gate to collect children in their care each morning; we respectfully ask that all parents/carers dropping children off at school remain at the school gates and follow social distancing regulations of 2m between each family and all adults should wear a mask.

We have been directed (as every school has) to restrict **adult access to the main building and the outside classrooms to staff only** in order to protect each 'bubble' and minimise any direct or indirect transfer of the virus in as far as this is possible. Parents/carers are asked to phone into the office and speak to the secretary to arrange passing on of messages or to organise return phone calls from teachers when they are available to do so.

Meetings **will** be arranged on request and **by appointment** only to ensure they can be accommodated safely and following regulation guidelines that will protect the safety of all adults and pupils.

It is our sole intention to open our school and keep it open and when we all play our part, we will ensure this will be the case.

P1: Mrs Mc Fall - 9:00am

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P2: Miss McGahey - 9:30am

P3: Mrs Nugent - 9:40am

P4: Master Hanna - 9:30am

P5: Mrs Kenwell - 9:00am

P6: Mrs Bradley - 9:15am

P7: Mrs Kinsella - 9:30am

P1 – P3 classes will use top pedestrian gate and follow staff along path into Main Entrance.

P4 – P7 will use lower pedestrian gate and follow staff along the path towards the bottom of the front yard.

This arrangement needs cooperation from all parents about not entering school premises in the morning and respecting arrival times for your child. The same cooperation is required for

Home Times:-

Primary 1 parent will be given details in the letter posted home next week.

P2: 1:40pm

P3: 2:00pm

P4: 2:15pm

P5: 2:30pm

P6: 2:45pm

P7: 3:00pm

Pupils from each class/'bubble' will be brought out to you at the time given. Please ensure you are on time to avoid congestion of traffic outside the school; please do not hold conversations at the school gates as we need to avoid adults and groups mixing as much as possible to protect us all.

Once again, please phone the school to speak to staff if you have any issues or concerns and we will return your call as soon as we are able to do so.

We will keep these arrangements under constant review when in place and as we all, children, parents and staff become used to following them; as soon as changes can be made to reduce time intervals, we will inform you immediately.

We appreciate fully the implications for family groups regarding different start and finish times. However, we are not in a position to address this due to current regulations surrounding the need to keep all classes or 'bubbles' separate.

Lunches and dinners.

- Under current guidance, children should not bring anything into school with them from home with the exceptions of their lunch, which we request is placed in a clear plastic food bag and not in a lunch box or lunch bag. **PLEASE**, keep all toys, footballs, dolls at home for your child to play with when there. They should eat their own lunch and break and not share with peers.
- Pupils will not bring anything home from school with them either.
- Under current guidance, all groups of pupils (either classes or in sets) will be regarded as a separate 'bubble' and should not be allowed to mix with children from any other 'bubble' or group.

The points above highlight clearly that we will not be able to have 8 different dinner sittings to provide free or paid dinners to pupils in their separate 'bubble' so all pupils will be asked to have lunch.

Should there be any directive from EA and School Meals Provision, we will notify you immediately as to what this may be.

Children who are sick or who become sick in school:

DE Guidance states that we should 'isolate' any child who becomes unwell or who is showing symptoms of Coronavirus.

St Patrick's PS has designated the current Staff Room as a safe and comfortable location for any child who is unwell and they will be supervised and taken care of by a member of staff at all times until a parent/carer can come to collect them.

It is very important that we work together on this as we need any child who is ill to go home as soon as possible. Please ensure we have a working mobile contact number for each child.

There is not a day goes by that someone must go home ill - it will happen, but we will make your child as comfortable as we can until you arrive. Please phone into the school when you are outside in the car and remain there, and we will take your child out to you.

Please ensure if your child has been ill/sick the previous night or that morning, that you do not bring them to school but seek alternative child- minding arrangements.

We cannot take the chance of 'waiting to see how they get on.'

We are fully aware of the concerns regarding children's welfare and learning 'gap' created due to lockdown. It will be our priority initially, to make school a welcoming and safe place where children want to be and feel cared for.

We will address as a priority, how they feel and think about the world they are in now and seek to reassure them that we can be make school a 'safe' place in every way possible; teaching and establishing a good hand hygiene routine across all classes/'bubbles' in the school will be on-going; 20 second rule and how to properly wash their hands will reinforce the excellent routines you will have established at home already.

Good respiratory hygiene will also be a priority and an on-going focus in every group across the school; "Catch it! Bin it! Kill it" will be the mantra along side the use of tissues to cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and in the absence of a tissue, use of the crook of the arm to safely cough into.

Above all, we recognise that one metre distancing between children physically will challenge them all but we will calmly, quietly and gently keep consistently reminding them of the need to maintain it.

At this stage, regulations do not recommend children wearing face masks/coverings in school simply because they will not adhere to their correct use - even adults find this VERY challenging indeed. ALL adults will be expected to wear masks.

If, and when, regulations change regarding schools, you will be informed immediately whatever changes that may bring about for organisation.

Until then, please, do not hesitate to contact with suggestions or any concerns you may have and I will endeavour to respond with the best knowledge and information available to me at this time. COVID19 has made an impact on all our lives that will remain with us for a long time to come.

I fully acknowledge the frustrations for all parents due to school reopening but with regulations changing how it was before lock down. This is something we all must manage together and no one is to blame for changes necessary to try and ensure we keep our school open when we start back again.

Take care, keep safe and well,

With very best wishes,

Anne McGuinness (Principal)