



St. Anne's School

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Principal: Pauline Dempsey

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Dear Parent / Guardian

I am writing to keep you informed of all that is going on in St. Anne's as we prepare to reopen our school. We are very busy and working hard on policies, procedures and procurements in order to get everything ready for the safe return of our pupils and the staff. Everything that we do is in line with all the recommendations and guidelines that the Department of Education have given.

We are fortunate to have a new set of prefabs on site, this alone has enabled us to consider physical distancing in a way that will suit the diversity of needs of our pupils. They are almost completed and should be ready when the school opens.

Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance

We are currently planning and changing 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. Our classes have small numbers with 6 being the average number of pupils. Extra space has been allocated to some classes and pupil numbers reduced in others. Each class is considered to be a bubble and we will do our best to ensure that there is as little contact as possible between bubbles.

Within bubbles children are to be organised into pods, the idea of this is that pods stay together but some social distancing may be required. Based on the size of our classrooms and the number of pupils in each room social distancing will be implemented according to the needs of the children. This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing as far as is practicable.

Decreasing Interaction. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground.

Entering and Exiting the School. The pupils will all have different entry and exit points according to where their classroom is. This strategy is constantly under development as we currently do not know the bus schedule nor the passenger lists.

Break Times. Bubbles will be allocated different play areas. Plans are in place and will be developed further

Children feeling unwell. *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 and parents asked to collect them from the school. It is essential at this time that we have active phone numbers and a backup emergency contact number if you are delayed when asked to collect your child.*

Returning from Abroad. Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List are obliged to quarantine and should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period.

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Hygiene Protocol. As a school we have always placed good hygiene practice high up on our list of priorities. Staff will follow through on all recommendations and support our pupils in their understanding and awareness of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

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.

Kind Regards

Pauline Dempsey

Principal