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Principal: Pauline Dempsey

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30<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Dear Parents/guardians

Summer is drawing to a close and preparations have been underway over the summer to ensure that the school is ready for the safe return of our pupils. Last year was a very positive year for us in that our Covid Plan was very effective and we successfully managed and minimised any impact Covid may have had on our school.

We have completed a thorough deep down clean of all the rooms and ensured that we have a full supply of all PPE's, sanitisers, protective clothing and signage necessary to get us through the year. As the variants change and evolve so do our processes, it is important that we maintain the very high standards we set last year. This was only possible with the continued support and understanding of you, the parents, who assisted us at every turn and with every request. Our aim is to keep our school open, healthy, happy and safe.

The Department of Education continues to support us with additional funding and good advice. Current advice is to continue with what we did last school year and to maintain and implement all previous recommendations issued. We are also being provided with a number of portable Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors, this will enable us to assess appropriate levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in our classrooms and will indicate that areas/rooms may not be adequately ventilated. Guidelines stress the importance of good ventilation particularly with new variants that have been identified. Fortunately our rooms have the capacity to be appropriately ventilated and this has not proven to be a problem. However we welcome this additional resource to help us provide a safer environment for our children.

There are some important points I would like to bring to your attention:

#### Foreign Travel

This is not a matter for the school to investigate. As parents you are responsible for compliance with public health advice and I ask that you refer to government advice on international travel on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) to check on the restrictions in place in the country you have visited (or intend to visit) and the protocols you are required to follow on your return. These can change quite suddenly.

### Children Returning to School

There is no formal requirement that parents complete the Return to Educational Facility form for their child but we would ask that you continue to do this as it has been invaluable to the school. The form is available on our website at this link:

<http://www.stannesthecurragh.ie/content/images/Docs/31.08.2021%20St.%20Annes%20Student%20Pre%20RTS%20Declaration.pdf>

If you have difficulty in downloading this form or you do not have access to a printer then you may write a short note in your child's communication book to say that you have no reason to believe that your child has an infectious disease and that you have followed all medical and public health guidance with respect to exclusion of your child from educational facilities.

I understand that the Department of Education will be launching a social media campaign for parents which will address the issue of when children should not attend school, I hope that you find this helpful. Meanwhile I ask that you continue, as before with the guidance suggested below:

- Please keep your child at home if they appear unwell. As parents/guardians you know your child very well, we ask that you maintain a "heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which might suggest illness/COVID-19 infection and, where symptoms are present, children should not attend the school."
- Please be available to collect your child from school when we call you to tell you they are ill. Delay in responding to our call can compromise the health and wellbeing of other children and staff.
- In the event of staff absences, our protocol relating to unusual patterns of absences within staff will be employed. It is very likely that your child's class will be closed at some stage and classes may remain closed until such time as a suitable replacement can be found to cover the class safely.

There is also Guidance and resources on the DES website to support the wellbeing of school communities. The link for parents can be found here

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/af24b-wellbeing-guidance-documents-for-parents-students-and-schools/#parents>

Other useful links:

1. Video advice for parents and students at different levels  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/#returning-to-school>
2. Posters/graphics advice for parents  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/#returning-to-school>
3. Multilingual advice for parents  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0cf46-resources-and-materials-for-parentsguardians-and-for-students-on-returning-to-school-multi-lingual/>

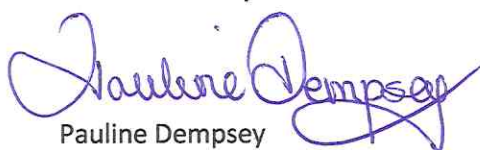
4. Communications to Parents regarding School Transport – SEN and Primary  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/64a88-school-transport/>

It is important for everyone's safety that we continue to work together on this as we have in the past and provide appropriately for our children. We are looking forward to seeing them on Wednesday and to the start of our new school year.

The above information may change in line with public health advice and we will keep you informed of any changes that may occur.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries regarding this letter or any other matter relating to our school at this time.

Yours sincerely



Pauline Dempsey  
Principal