16.08.21

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

As we make our final arrangements at school and home in preparation for opening again, I am sure that there is great excitement. Until we receive updated guidance we will continue to follow the rules and routines we had established in the last school year, which proved effective in keeping everyone well and safe.

It is the aim of school staff to promote:

A sense of safety,

A sense of calm

A sense of belonging and connectedness

A sense of “we can do this”

A sense of hope

(gov.ie/backtoschool)

Getting back to a school routine, getting enough sleep, taking physical exercise, eating healthily and being with other children, will help everyone to settle back into school.

The following arrangements may be changed at short notice following updated guidance.

**Arrival to school:**

No pupil will arrive to school before 8:45am.

The external school gates will not be open to pupils until 8:45am.

All parents are expected to check their child’s temperature before arriving at school. If a child feels hot on the back or chest or has a temperature of 37.8c or greater they must not be sent to school. If they have any Covid like symptoms they should remain at home. Guidelines have been provided on our website. Parents should contact the school immediately for advice or to report that their child has a positive Covid text result.

All pupils must wash their hands before leaving home in the morning. All pupils must be prepared for school and have a clear understanding of Catch it, Bin it, Kill it routines for coughing and sneezing. On arrival to school all pupils will wash/sanitise their hands. These measures also help to reduce more common colds, flus and vomiting bugs.

 **Pastoral Induction Day P2 – P7 Mainstream Tuesday 31st August**.

We are splitting the school into alphabetical groups who will attend for 1 and half hours per group:

Surnames beginning A through to McC **9.00 – 10.30am**

Surnames beginning McD through to Z **11.30 – 1.00**

**Nursery/P1 - Parents have been informed of induction times.**

**LSC/ASC – individual arrangements apply and staff will begin contacting parents from the 24th August.**

**School Meals and Cash Handling**

The school will continue to use the online system for school meals. All pupils receiving dinners either free or paid must sign up to this system. This will be the only system for paying and we advise all parents to prepare for this by having a Debit Card.

The school will no longer be providing hot deserts and children will get a hand held desert instead. The cost will remain as £2.60 per day. The school menu is on the school website in the Parent Area and is subject to change.

If you feel that your child is entitled to free school meals/uniform allowance then please go online at [www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-school-uniform-allowance](http://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-school-uniform-allowance) and apply as soon as possible as it can take up to six weeks for an application to be processed. Until the education Authority verifies and supports an application, parents must provide a packed lunch for their child.

**Homework**

Parents will be informed of Homework procedures once the children return to school.

**Items to bring to school**

Please see the list provided in the parent area on the website

**School Uniform**

Nursery, P1 and P2 wear their tracksuits.

(P3 –P7) Full school uniform is expected and can be alternated with the PE uniform

DENI Guidance - While Coronavirus can land on fabrics and remain for some time, schools are not a high risk environment and while all children and where possible young people should be encouraged to wear clean uniform or fresh clothes each day, this is not essential and schools should be mindful of their school community and avoid creating additional pressure / expense on parents.

**Isolation Room**

We will have a designated isolation room which will be used in the event of a child feeling unwell. Children displaying symptoms will be taken to this room and supervised until their parent arrives immediately to take them home. They will be looked after in a calm and relaxed way. **It is vital that every child has a number of current telephone contacts.**

We will still have to be overcautious if a child becomes unwell so will operate a “home immediately policy” to ensure the well-being of all children and staff. Parents need to play their part by arranging to have their child collected as soon as possible. All contacts should be current and contacts must be available to take calls.

**School Entrances and Exits (Beginning and end of school day).**

All four entrances will be used by the children and there will be no morning assembly. Children will exit in the same way. **Only parents of P1 (Mrs. Mackin and Miss Monaghan) and P2 (Ms Fitzpatrick) will be able to go as far as the inner gate during the Induction Week. P3 – P4 children will be expected to walk in from the outer gate**. Parents with children in both P1 and Mrs. Leonard’s class are asked to go to P2 first and then P1.

 **Staff will be located at entrances and yards to guide children to their classes.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Entrance** | **Classes** |
| Nursery Gate and Pathway (do not park in the lower car park) | Nursery  |
| Main Entrance | ASC1/ASC2/LSC1/LSC2 |
| Middle Entrance  | P2 – Mrs. Leonard |
| Top entrance (Inner Gate) | P1 (Mrs. Mackin and Miss Monaghan and P2 (Ms Fitzpatrick)  |
| Top Entrance (Gate at Road) | P3 – P7 |

**P1 Pupils**

It is our aim for all children to walk into their classrooms themselves from the gate. We realise that some P1 children may need a little more support for a short time and parents may need to do a handover at the entrance to the block to ease transition. An older brother or sibling could also take their P1 brother or sister to the entrance of the block.

We ask that parents/carers exercise social distancing at all times (1 Metre) inside the school boundaries and not to stay onsite for any longer than is absolutely necessary. Walk in calmly with your child beside you. Our school site is open and exposed and we recommend that as you may have to wait for your child to exit, you too are prepared for the weather.

**Staggered Drop Offs and Pick Ups**

We are continuing with our staggered drop offs and pick ups until further notice. We urge all parents to ensure that their children are onsite before 9.05 as the gates will close. A timetable has been provided on our website in the Parent’s section.

**Morning and After Schools Clubs will be considered after a full return and following guidance in relation to managing ‘Bubbles’.**

**Points to remember**:

* School gates will not be open until 8:45 am for pupils.

NO EARLY ARRIVALS PERMITTED.

* Parents/Carers cannot enter school at any time unless invited/arranged
* Parents/Carers must not gather outside school grounds
* All adults should find a safe place to drop their child, away from points of congestion, and allow them to walk to school.
* Parents are not allowed to park inside the school gates.
* Do not send your child to school if they or anyone in their home are displaying any signs of coronavirus
* All pupils must be collected immediately if school phones their contact. Phone numbers must be current.

**While we in St. Joseph’s are all looking forward to welcoming back our pupils we are, like everyone else, waiting to see how the situation will develop, as Covid is still prevalent in this area. This is why we need the support of all parents in following our routines, even when it makes things difficult. Settling our pupils and staff back to school safely is our priority.**

**Thank you for your cooperation**

Mrs. Frances Hannaway

Principal