



St. Joseph's P.S. Galbally

Learning, Friendship, Respect

RE: School Reopening Update

7th August 2020

Dear Parent,

I trust this letter finds you well and enjoying the summer break, albeit in trying circumstances. Over the summer break, the Governors and I have overseen extensive planning for the safe reopening of the school, informed by the Department's Guidance issued at the end of June which mandated a 1 metre social distancing requirement as part of their 'New School Day' guidance.

This would have resulted in us being unable to accommodate our usual class sizes and reopen with a 'Blended Learning' pattern of education with 40% time in school and 60% remote learning. Much preparation had gone into having this provision in place.

Shortly after 5pm yesterday evening, the Minister communicated to all schools that, 'strict social distancing requirements between all pupils will be relaxed from a specific distance to the best spacing that can be achieved but will remain in place between adults and, as far as it is practicable between adults and pupils', thereby enabling **all the children to return to school at the start of the new school year in protective class bubbles.**

We have also been informed that, subject to the agreement of the Department's medical colleagues, that **detailed guidance** for school reopening will be published by Thursday 13th August 2020. As a result, more detailed information about the school reopening will be shared with you once this guidance has been reviewed by the school and Governors.

In the meantime, following a Board of Governors' meeting held last night, I can confirm the following:

- Primary 7 pupils will return to school on **Monday 24 August.**
- Primary 1 pupils will be invited to a phased small-group induction between **Monday 24th – Friday 28th August.** (*Specific dates and times to be shared with parents week beginning 17th August.*)

Principal: Hugh Meenagh | 7 Lurgylea Road, Galbally, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone
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- Children in Primary 2 – 6 will be invited to a pastoral induction session during the **week beginning 24th August**, where we will welcome the children in small groups to familiarise themselves with their new classrooms, teachers and new school practices regarding guidelines in relation to covid-19.
- Children to wear full school uniform (available from Kelly's Drapery, Dungannon - 028 8772 2970).
- Returning to school after almost 6 months will be a challenging time for everyone, and pastoral care and settling back in safely will be an essential part of our initial return. The initial return will focus on pastoral and social elements as well as learning the new COVID-19 protocols required within and around the school.
- Returning will bring many new routines for our children, parents and staff. Details of new protocols will be shared on the **week beginning 17th August** regarding staggered drop-off and collection times, hygiene procedures and social distancing around the school building and grounds. We will also issue further guidance on school meals, lunches and healthy snacks. There will be limited movement around the school and class groups will remain in their own "bubbles" with staggered separate class group breaks and lunchtimes.
- All children will require their own stationery items which should be labelled and kept in school in their pencil cases. These will remain in school and should not be used or shared with any other children. School bags will not be needed in school until further notice.
- You will be informed of your child(ren)'s induction day(s), starting and finishing times and equipment required on the **week beginning 17th August**.
- Parents of children who are high-risk due to Covid-19 will be contacted individually the **week beginning 17th August**.
- School will be closed on Monday 31st August for the Bank Holiday.

I appreciate that there may be some children and parents who are anxious about the reopening of the school site and our aim is to alleviate those concerns during our induction week beginning 24th August. This will be an opportunity for the children to re-acclimatise to the school environment and the new safety measures being put in place.

The school day will, most certainly, look different to what we were all familiar with prior to Covid-19. The ethos of the school however remains the same and will be a positive constant for the children returning/starting school with us this forthcoming school year. We look forward to welcoming all the boys and girls back so they can have the opportunity to learn lots of new and exciting things in a safe, happy environment.

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Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,



Hugh Meenagh

Principal

KEY POINTS (*SUBJECT TO REVIEW*):

- All pupils returning 5 days a week.
- All pupils will return wearing normal full school uniform.
- Stationary equipment should be brought in a pencil case and left in school.
- No school bags needed initially.
- No after school clubs or breakfast club will take place initially.
- Assemblies, swimming or educational visits will not take place initially.
- No mixed-class coaching will take place. PE in class 'bubbles'.
- Anyone eligible for school uniform and meal allowance should go to:
www.cani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-school-uniform-allowance

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