

Dear parents & guardians,

Many of you may have questions and we have compiled a list of frequently asked questions below. As you can appreciate this is a hectic time in the school as we make all preparations for our reopening, which is regularly updated in line with the evolving government guidelines. Detailed information will be contained in our risk assessment and COVID Response Plan, which will be available on our school website by the end of this week.

Returning to School FAQ:

➤ 1: Should children wear masks to school?

No. The current health advice is that masks are not recommended to be worn by children under the age of 13.

➤ 2: Will the school staff wear masks when the school reopens?

In line with the guidelines set out by the department of education, staff will wear masks when they cannot keep a 2m distance from children. In some cases, when dealing with children with hearing impairment or additional needs or due to personal reasons visors will be worn.

Additional PPE will only be required by staff in certain circumstances, i.e. when tending to intimate care needs, administering first aid or when dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19. Please note that classrooms will be arranged to accommodate the recommended 2m distance and so teachers will only wear masks intermittently throughout the day as required and during transitions.

➤ 3: Do I need to buy extra uniforms?

Children will wear their school tracksuits as normal. Parents, as always, are asked to ensure children arrive at school clean and tidy. Children can bring school bags. Bags will be placed under their chair with coats placed inside.

➤ 4: How will yard time be different when children return to school?

The number of children playing on each yard will be significantly reduced this year and we will use additional space at the front of the school; children will only be on the yard with others from their class bubble.

➤ 5: What is a bubble?

A bubble of children is used to describe all the children in a class group.

➤ 6 :What is a Pod?

A pod of children is a smaller group (usually 4-6 children) within a bubble who may be grouped consistently for group work and sharing of resources. The groupings will be readjusted if required depending on the dynamics of the class and following natural breaks in the school year (e.g. after Christmas holidays etc).

➤ 7: How will morning time work in the school?

Children will be accepted directly into their classroom. Children should use the entrances and routes specified for their class. Staff will be positioned to guide children appropriately. Parents are asked to leave their children at the gates. Both gates will be open and children will enter the school from both sides.

➤ 8: How will home time work in school?

When the school day for that class is over the following arrangements will apply – Children from 3rd – 6th class should meet their parents at the school gates/prearranged areas where possible. The class teacher will walk their class to the exit point and staff positioned at designated points throughout the grounds. 5th and 6th classes will begin leaving at 2.20 with 3rd and 4th at the usual time of 2:30.

➤ 9 : What if I need to speak to the class teacher about my child?

Class teachers may be contacted in the traditional method of writing a note in the child's journal, through email or the school app. It is important to note that the teacher will not be available to speak during the school day. If required meetings with teachers will be arranged by only.

➤10: Is the annual payment of book money still required for the school year 2020/21?

As you are aware, our school was one of those identified for inclusion in the School Book Pilot Scheme with the objective of providing free books to students. However, €25 is required towards art and craft materials, photocopying that was purchased by the school. This can be paid by cash or card at the office.

➤ 11: Will children be assigned homework when they return to school?

Initially the focus will be on a positive return to school for children and homework will not be assigned in the first month. Teachers will communicate the homework expectations after this, there may be some changes to how homework is corrected and administered as we try to minimise the risk of the spread of the virus.

➤ 12: My child usually attends after school clubs, will these be running in this school year?

Following the recommended practice from our governing body, we feel it is in the children's best interest to suspend before and after school clubs for term one. This will be reviewed later in the year.

➤ 13: What additional cleaning measures has the school taken to minimise the spread of the virus?

The school is cleaned by contract cleaners every day after the children leave the premises. In addition to this, the school has increased its cleaning regime on site each day, cleaning touchpoints, handrails, toilets etc. on rotation. The department has provided explicit instructions regarding the cleaning of schools which we are compliant. The school will ensure classrooms have a sufficient supply of appropriate cleaning materials.

➤ 14: What hand hygiene facilities are in the school?

We have paper towels for hand drying. In addition to this each classroom has a sanitising station. Children will be taught effective hand hygiene procedures and asked to wash/sanitise hands at scheduled times throughout each day in addition to toileting etc. There will also be sanitising stations available throughout the school building for all adults working in the school.

➤ 15. Please ensure the school has updated information on your child's medical needs.