



Re-opening of St. Conaire's NS, Monday, August 31st, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Our Board of Management and school staff are looking forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school for the 2020/2021 school year tomorrow, Monday, August 31st.

It is crucially important that you take the time to carefully read and to familiarise yourself with the content of our re-opening document: 'St. Conaire's N.S COVID 19 Response Plan'.

This is an evolving situation. We will continue to follow Government and NPHET advice.

Some very important points to remember are:

- Children must wash their hands prior to leaving home in the morning, they will be asked to sanitise their hands on entry to the classroom
- Children must be dropped and collected promptly. Gates will be locked at 8.55 a.m.
- Parents must wear face coverings at all times
- Parents must stay 2m apart. Please follow the direction markers on the yard.
- Parents are not allowed enter the school yard (Exceptions parents of infant classes initially and parents of children with additional needs).
- While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying fever, high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or above), any type of cough, sore throat, loss of taste/smell, shortness of breath 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. Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at:

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

- Please inform your child that if he/she reports unwell to the class teacher, our new procedure is to bring him/her to a special room called an 'Isolation Room' until collected by a parent.
- **Please ensure your contact details are up to date on Aladdin Connect. Please also ensure the contact sheet when sent home is clearly filled in with additional contacts for emergencies.**
- Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding handwashing 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.
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>
- Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period

Children will not be required to bring a schoolbag for the month of September. A lunchbox and pencil case (pencil case will remain in school) are all that is required. Please see school response plan for details on lunches.

- All meetings with teachers must be by appointment and with prior approval of Principal. In so far as possible, all communications with teachers should be via phone.
- New terminology: Class = **Bubble**; Group of pupils within a class = **Pod**

RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance

We continue to work on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our 1970's building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way.

Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: –

Increasing Separation. This will be achieved by reconfiguring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 6, depending on the numbers in classes) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom.

Decreasing Interaction. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be different entry and exit points for different classes which will be communicated to you in a separate document. There will be markers on the yard to remind children

of safe distancing. Junior Bubbles and Senior Bubbles will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground. We will do our best to make these routines enjoyable for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

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 our adapted school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal. We appreciate your cooperation with us in the implementation of our new measures to mitigate risk our risk. We look forward to a happy and safe return.

Finally, as we return to school tomorrow, we would like to express our gratitude to everyone who helped prepare the school for re-opening. We would like to thank all the staff who gave many hours to move furniture, organise, clean, plan and get the buildings ready. Thanks also to Zimmer Biomet and EI Electronics for their practical support. We would also like to thank the Parents' Association, volunteers, past pupils and others who contributed massively to the work that had to be done. Everyone's support has made it possible for us to re-open.

Attached to this letter you will find some photographs related to our opening tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Walsh

Principal (on behalf of the school staff and Board of Management)