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**Scoil Chroí Naofa**

**Fáilte ar ais - Return to school**

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I hope you and your families are keeping well.

As you are aware, our school has now been closed since 12th March due to the COVID-19 situation. We are now hoping to re-open our school safely, in line with current guidance and recommendations.

Re-opening the school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our School Community – BoM, School Leadership, Staff, Parents and Pupils. We will all be called on to play our part in ensuring that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner, which prevents the spread of the virus and allows the vital work of Teaching and Learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible.

We have been working on our plan for the safe reopening of the school for some weeks now and have published the “DES COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools” on our school website. The Response Plan gives details of

* Physical preparation, signage, hand sanitiser stations,
* Advice, procedures and training for the safe return to working in the school for all school staff and pupils
* General and specific advice on how all pupils, staff, parents and visitors will prevent the spread of the virus

We have also published our COVID-19 Policy Statement on the school website. Our BoM will keep you informed as to the progress of our re-opening plans and provide you with the information required by you to play your part in safely re-opening the school.

We are really looking forward to welcoming our children back to school and will be doing all that we can to ensure that the return to school is a safe and enjoyable experience for the children.

We are currently working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our buildings. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

**Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -**

***Increasing Separation*.** This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class in the school will now be its own independent group and will be referred to as a bubble. We will have 9 class bubbles in our school. We will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the class bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children who will sit together and who will stay in their pod which is at least 1 metre form other pods 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 marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground. We will make these routines enjoyable activities 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 the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

The control measures we have put in place to allow all pupils and staff return to work safely are as follows. However, please be aware these measures are under constant review and if they are changed in any way you will be notified as soon as is practically possible.

**Staggered School Start Times**

Friday 28th August - Friday 11th September

|  |
| --- |
| Junior Infants |
| 10am for all pupils |

Monday 31st August (Senior Infants-6th class) until the foreseeable future

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pupils whose surnames begin with A -H | Pupils whose surnames begin with I - P | Pupils whose surnames begin with Q - Z |
| 9:10am | 9:15am | 9:20am |

* All Junior Infant pupils will begin at 10 am each day until 12.10pm from Friday 28th August until Friday 11th September 2020.

* Gates will now open at 9:10 am each day.
* Parents / Guardians and Children are asked not to be on school premises before 9:10 am.
* We ask that all parents / guardians wear a face covering upon entering the school playground.
* Children will no longer congregate outside or line up in the morning rather they will go directly to their classrooms through their designated door where they will be greeted by their teacher each morning.
* Children will follow a colour coded marking system in place.
* If you are bringing pupils with differing surnames to school each morning please choose one time slot to enter the premises.
* If you are on foot you will enter the premises via the small entry gate in building 1 and follow the parent zone markers until the “Children only beyond this point” sign, there your child/ren will continue on to school and you will follow the markers to exit through the large gate in Building 1
* If you are on foot and dropping off children to building 2 you will follow the parent zone until the “Children only beyond this point” sign, there your child/ren will continue on to school and you will follow the markers to exit.
* For those travelling by vehicle we ask that you now follow our one way drop off system.
* Cars will drive into the one way system via the secondary school and church. On entering the zone parents are asked to stay in their cars and only children will alight.
* Children will follow the marked entry point through the large gate in Building 1 and marked entry point in Building 2.

#### Pupil Start & Finish Times Daily until at least Friday 11th September 2020.

In order to ensure the safe egress of our pupils, classes will have differing finish times to what was once normal.

We ask that in the event of parents/guardians/children waiting for siblings they should do so in the designated Parent Zones or outside the walls in a socially distant fashion.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Start Time  | Finish Time  |
| Junior Infants  | 10:00am  | 12.20pm / 1:50pm |
| Senior Infants  | 9:20am  | 2pm  |
| 1st Class  | 9:20am | 2:45pm  |
| 2nd Class  | 9:20am | 2:50pm  |
| 3rd Class  | 9:20am | 2:50pm  |
| 4th Class  | 9:20am | 2:55pm  |
| 5th Class  | 9:20am | 3pm  |
| 6th Class  | 9:20am | 3pm  |

**Pupils Entering & Exiting the Building**

Doors have been allocated to class groups and will be supervised in the morning and evening times to ensure social distancing is observed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Junior Infants  | Building 1 back door  |
| Senior Infants  | Building 1 back door  |
| 1st Class  | Building 1 side door |
| 2nd Class  | Building 1 side door  |
| 3rd Class  | Building 2 side entrance through door 2  |
| 4th Class  | Building 2 side entrance through door 1 |
| 5th Class  | Building 2 side entrance through door 3  |
| 6th Class A and B | Building 1 front door  |

We at Scoil Chroí Naofa appreciate your support as we try to safely reopen the school buildings. If at all possible we request you not to come onto the school grounds or into the school building unless it is essential. We appreciate that dropping off Junior & Senior Infant pupils to the line in the yard is essential, but for the older pupils a drop off at the school gate or parent zone is desirable. Working together we hope to be able to progress the reopening in as safe a manner as possible for all.

We would ask all parents to familiarise themselves with the above drop-off and collection routines for the safe delivery and collection of pupils from school. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year.

It is imperative that

* Adults do not come within 2m of each other at all times.
* Parents/Guardians do not try to have meetings with members of staff in the playground at drop-off and collection times – meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement. (This may have to be more restrictive depending on further guidance - it is quite possible that the recommendation will be for remote meetings/telephonic communications.)
* All parents adhere to the drop-off and collection plans as outlined above.

**Break Times**

We will have to stagger yard breaks until further notice to effectively ensure the safety of each class bubble and staff members. Breaks will now be for two twenty minute periods. All food waste, wrappers etc. must now be brought home in your child’s lunchbox so please take this into consideration and plan lunches accordingly.

Please note the following.

* There will be four yard areas
* Our plan is not weather dependant and so does not include the grass areas

* Each class has their own area.

Area 1 – Front and side of Building 1 – Junior Infants, Senior Infants,

Area 2 – from Basketball court to road of Building 1 - 2ndclass , 6th class

(We will make division larger when 6th class yard time so as 6th class bubbles may be beside each other )

Area 3 – Building 2 split A – 1st class, 3rd class

Area 4 – Building 2 split B - 4th class, 5th class

Junior Infants, 1st class, 2nd class and 4th class will now have break from 11am-11.20am and then from 12.20pm – 12.40pm

Senior Infants, 3rd class, 5th class and 6th class will now have break from 11.25am – 11.45am and then from 12.45pm – 1.05pm

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Break 1A: 11.00 – 11.20amBreak 2A: 12.20 – 12.40pm | Area 1: Junior InfantsArea 2: 2nd class | Area 3: 1st classArea 4: 4th class |
|  |  |  |
| Break 1B: 11.25 – 11.45amBreak 2B: 12.45 – 1.05pm | Area 1: Senior InfantsArea 2: 6th class | Area 3: 3rd classArea 4: 5th class |

Teachers will walk their class to their play area and collect them from the area for each break. Children should walk to their play area observing social distancing, please practice this at home if possible.

While out on yard children will be asked to play with children while respecting the 1m social distancing. In this way children can all play with one another from their class bubble and not just children in their pod.

**Pupil Materials.**

* Please **label** all pupil materials and ensure your child has all the necessary school materials each day. Unfortunately, unnecessary personal items are now not allowed in school.
* Please be reminded that pupils cannot now share materials such as crayons, pencils, sharpeners etc and each pupil should have their own.
* We ask that all pupil textbooks and copies are covered this year so they may be wiped down before/ after use
* We ask that each child has a labelled packet of tissues, a labelled zip lock bag to put their used tissues into and a labelled small hand sanitiser for their own use at their pods throughout the day. This way you can monitor when tissues need to be replaced and avoid unnecessary exposure between pods in the class.
* Lunchboxes and drink bottles will be kept in your child’s schoolbag for the full school day so please ensure that bottle tops are non leak and that your child can open and close his/ her belongings easily.
* Coats will be kept in school bags also. Please ensure that your child’s coat and lunch materials only can fit in your child’s school bag ( ie take all other materials out of bag and check both fit comfortably).
* If your child cannot tie his/ her own shoelaces please ensure they wear Velcro shoes/runners to school.

**Uniforms**

We ask that all children wear either the formal uniform or school tracksuit to school.

### **What do I do if I need to drop off lunchbox, Sports gear etc… after 9:20am?**

Don’t worry, a box will be left in the parent zone of Building 1 for items to be brought into school after 9:20am. Just contact the school via the school’s Aladdin connect App (more info attached) or via our phone number (044) 92 22 389 to inform us of your drop off. Please do not leave a message on our voicemail as we may not get to pick up your message.

### **PPE & Hygiene**

The DES have issued a number of grants in recent week to support schools to ensure the safe return of everyone involved.

The following measure will be put into place in our school;

* A Contact log will be maintained
* A 2m area will be marked off around every teacher’s desk area to ensure . SET areas will differ but this will be discussed with those involved before returning.
* Every teacher will be issued with DES deemed appropriate PPE.
* Each Teacher will continue to collect their colour coded cloth each morning.
* Tables will be wiped down daily by teachers / pupils as was our new normal before closure, In addition Teacher’s sink, desk, bathroom handles are now to be wiped daily as well as ensuring toilets are flushed before leaving classroom.
* Colour coded cloth will be put into wash baskets provided each day.
* Every class room will have anti-bacterial spays and wipes
* Gloves and aprons will be readily available
* Every teachers desk will have a 500ml hand sanitiser
* Every classroom will have a hand sanitiser unit installed for the children to use
* Soaps dispensers are in toilets for the children and there will be a hand one at the classroom sink area
* Every classroom will have a foot pedal bin for waste.
* There will be signage displayed throughout the school and in classrooms.
* Social distancing floor spacers will be in corridors, at classroom toilets and outside
* There will be spots sprayed on the ground outside for parents to wait at and always to reinforce social distancing.
* All classroom doors will be secured open for the entirety of the school day to prevent constant use of handle and touching of the surface area
* No child should be sent around the school for jobs or to the office during the school day
* Every room in the school will be cleaned and wiped down each day by cleaning staff. The cleaner will close over the door when finished that evening. The teacher will be the first person to open it the next morning and pin it open.
* Cleaning staff and caretaker will have specific training before starting back to work. Each member will have a daily checklist of duties to complete ensuring all school areas are looked after.
* Common surfaces such as doors etc will be cleaned throughout the day
* The school offices are to remain for admin staff only.
* We will allocate staff specific toilets to classroom location

**Frequency of Hand Hygiene throughout the school day**

Pupils should perform hand hygiene:

* On arrival at school;
* Before eating or drinking;
* After using the toilet;
* After playing outdoors
* When their hands are physically dirty;
* When they cough or sneeze.

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing 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.

**Communication**

Please read the attached letter to gleen vital information as to how you may connect to our school and your children’s classes via the Aladdin Connect app. This letter can be found at the end of this newsletter.

**Finally… It is so important to note…**

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs 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.

Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

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

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 the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

Ní neart go cur le chéile – Unity is strength

If we all work together, together we can provide a safe environment for all.

I look forward to meeting you and your child on their first day back.

Is mise le meas,

Kathleen McNamee

Príomhoide

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**Scoil Chroí Naofa**

**Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath**

**e-mail:** **scoilchroinaofarb@gmail.com**

**Phone: (044)9222389**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Our school is delighted to announce that we will shortly roll out the Aladdin Schools Connect to parents/guardians of children in our classes.

The school uses the Aladdin Schools software service [www.aladdin.ie](http://www.aladdin.ie/) for administrative purposes and Connect will give you secure access to messages from the school and to details of your child’s attendance, test results, reports cards etc  via secure login from your internet browser or Aladdin Connect App

Aladdin Connect is a fantastic way to enhance a school's communication with  parents.

It enables parents to stay connected and informed about their child's education by

* Ensuring that the school has their most **up to date contact information**
* Allowing schools to gather **permission(s)** from parents
* Allowing parents to quickly and efficiently select preferred slots for **parent teacher meetings**
* Keeping parents apprised of their child's**attendance**
* Keeping parents up to date on **school and classroom news** via noticeboard messages
* Allowing parents to view what items their child had for **homework** today
* Keeping parents up to date on what **library book**their child is currently reading and if it is due/overdue to be returned
* Allowing parents view their child's approved **report card**
* Giving parents the option to opt in to share contact information with their child's classmates’ parents via the Parent Privacy option for the **class list.**
* Allowing parents to view their child's latest **standardised test results**

Along with strengthening our home/school partnership, we also envisage Aladdin Connect helping the school by:

* Helping to **improve attendance** by allowing parents to keep track of any school days their child may have currently missed, along with late arrival and early leaving information.
* Helping to reduce the amount of **class/school notes being sent home**
* Helping the school/ teachers**communicate** with parents when the need arise
* **Reducing costs** by eliminating the need to send school report cards by post
* **Reducing costs** by reducing the number of text messages that need to be sent

You can rest reassured that Aladdin Schools uses state-of-the-art security to safeguard information entered by the school and data is stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish and European data protection laws.

In the next few days, you will **receive a text/email message** containing your **registration link**.  There will be one link per parent which will allow the parent to access information for all their children in the school from one user account.

Please do not forward this text/email or share this link as this is a unique registration code for each parent for your child/children in this school.

 During registration you will choose a password that will be used in conjunction with your email address to securely access the Aladdin Connect going forward.

If you choose you may share your own contact details with other parents of children in the same class as your children, but please be reassured that this information will**not**be shared unless you choose to share it.

Once you are registered you will be sent an email with links to download the Aladdin Connect App for your mobile device. The main advantage of using the App is to receive immediate alerts for app messages sent by your school. Downloading the App is highly recommended to enhance both the parent and school's Connect experience.

**In preparation for this please let the school know by email** **scoilchroinaofarb@gmail.com** **if your email address or phone number has changed recently.**

*Please note: If there are any personal concerns, or legal provisions in place regarding giving access to Connect to any parent/guardian of your child please contact the school in confidence to discuss or restrict access as required*.

We hope that you enjoy using Aladdin Connect. Kathleen our school secretary or myself will welcome any feedback or questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen McNamee

Principal