

30 June 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer,

We last sent you a correspondence on Thursday 18th June where we explained that we were awaiting further guidance on School Reopening from the Department of Education NI.

The Department of Education NI have since sent guidance on Friday 19th June entitled

**“Coronavirus (COVID 19)- Northern Ireland Reopening Schools Guidance New School Day”**

The document focuses on guiding schools to reopen and refers to….

*“The journey back to normality for the education system will not be one where schools operate on a business as usual from day one…”*

The Education Minister Mr. Peter Weir MLA has stated that Primary Seven Pupils shall begin the return to school, week commencing 24 August, if safe to do so. All other children should return to school by the normal starting school dates, as is the usual arrangements for each school.

We felt that it was important that you know and understand the key guidance that our school will be following from August onwards (unless Government/HSE/PHA Guidelines change.)

1. Social Distancing will be key to controlling the spread of COVID 19.
2. Depending on transport information, we will have arrangements in place for entering and exiting the school. Parents will be informed of drop off/ collection points at school with staggered school start/end times to avoid too many people at the school gates and to promote social distancing; hence helping to control the COVID 19 virus.
3. Each child should remain one metre apart in any classroom (If this means less children in any classroom due to classroom size- then the Bubble Strategy should be applied.)
4. The Bubble Strategy is where each class will be halved and brought into school for split teaching sessions. Each half of the class will be known as a protective “Bubble”.
5. Due to the fact that our classrooms are NOT large enough to hold a FULL class of children one metre apart then our classes WILL BE HALVED. This means that all BUBBLE A children will attend school for two full days (Monday/ Tuesday) and BUBBLE B children will attend school for two full days (Thursday and Friday). On Wednesdays the school will be deep cleaned and teachers will prepare for Blended Learning.
6. If your child is at school for two full days per week this means that teachers will prepare to teach them face to face on these days and also prepare for online learning at home; hence BLENDING school and home.
7. It is important to note that all members of the same immediate family will be placed in the same protective bubble session so that a family attends school on the same days of the week.

Health and Safety for all our pupils and staff is paramount as per government guidelines. Hygiene in school will be crucial. Children will have a temperature check on arrival at school and if a child has a high temperature, parents will be informed and asked to take them home and keep them there for at least forty-eight hours. Children will wash their hands upon arrival at school, before/ after eating and after going to the toilet. Children will eat their break and possibly lunch in their classrooms. Each protective bubble group will play in the playground in their own timetabled sessions to avoid connection between bubbles. Schools will have appropriate signage, floor markings, posters etc to help guide pupils, staff and parents with social distancing and hygiene procedures. If anyone has symptoms of COVID 19 or contracts the virus normal self-isolation procedures will apply and parents of children in the bubble will be informed.

More information regarding EA Transport and School Meals Service will follow.

We realise that this guidance, although in the best interests of our children, is a big change to the normal school routine. We felt that it was pertinent to share this with you before the end of this academic year so that you have a chance to prepare yourself and your child for “The New School Day.” Please do note that if Government Guidance changes we will let you know as soon as possible.

Please keep the school updated with accurate mobile phone numbers and email addresses as we will be in touch with you again in August to update you ahead of starting school. When we update you in August we will provide more detailed guidance for you and your child.

The fight against COVID 19 has had, and will continue for some time to have, profound implications for our schools and for society as a whole. We take this opportunity to thank you for your understanding and support throughout what has been such a difficult time for us all. We hope that you have a more relaxing Summer Holiday and look forward to communicating with you again in August.

Sincerely yours,

**Strabane and District Principals’ Group**

Donemana PS – Mrs G Hayes

Gaelscoil Ui Dhochartaigh, Strabane- Mrs M NiDhochartaigh

Knockavoe School, Strabane – Mrs S Cassidy

St Catherine’s PS, Strabane- Mrs B Wilders

St Columba’s Clady - Mrs D McElmurray

St Mary’s PS, Cloughcor- Mrs A Devine

St Mary’s PS, Strabane – Mrs S O’Doherty

St Michael’s PS, Dunamanagh- Mrs J Carlin

St Theresa’s PS,Glebe- Mr G Brogan

Sion Mills PS – Mrs O Mc Nelis

Strabane PS.- Mrs C Thompson

St Michael’s PS, Dunnamanagh

Dear Parent(s),

Information from St Michael’s PS.

Our school bubbles are as follows:

Bubble A: attending Monday and Tuesday each week:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 (OD)  | P6 (JC) | P7 |
| J Patterson | D Ball | DDunleavy  | CJ O’Neill | J Dooher | Tiarnan Devine | N Gormley | E A Conwell |
| Liam Kelly | L Ostrowski | C Fulton | A Daly | M Dooher | Layla Kelly | O Finlay | Alexa Coyle  |
| Conleith Kelly | Caoimhe Devine | Dan O’Neill | G Daly | MG O’Neill | T Donaghey | MMDermott | S McGill |
| C Gormley | Eabha Devine |  | Cain Dooher | SR Dunleavy | Lorcan Kelly  | G Quinn | BJ O’Neill |
| EN O’Neill | Thomas Devine |  | E Doherty | C Robinson |  | S O’Neill | J McFadden |
| O Ostrowska | T R Duffin |  |  | Ashleen Daly |  |  | Tomas Dooher |
|  | T O Duffin |  |  | C McAleer |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | C Kelly |  |  |  |

Bubble B: attending Thursday and Friday each week:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 (OD) | P6(JC) | P7 |
| B Donaghey | Rose Kelly | A McGonigle | Kate Kelly | Daniel Kelly | A Tallon | R Bryson | Eadaoin McGill |
| E Bryson | Sam Kelly | A Sproule | Clara Keys | J Donaghey | M Keys | V Bryson | EJ Kerrigan |
| AJ Brolly | Aoibhinn McGill | A Logue | J McIntosh | Felicity Bryson | C Houston | D Sproule | Dara Gormley |
| MK Ward | Ciara McGill | Bronagh Devine | R Doherty | Florence Bryson | A Doherty | O Devine | Daithi Devine |
| H Keys  | C McGonigle |  |  | Alannah McGill |  |  | Dara Sproule |
|  | T Tallon |  |  | M Logue |  |  | E Harkin |
|  | O Brown |  |  | Hanna Devine |  |  |  |
|  | C Ward |  |  | Caitimae O’ Neill |  |  |  |

St Michael’s PS, Dunnamanagh

**Some Key Points based on the DE document ‘New School Day’:**

* **Primary 7 pupils will attend each day for the whole week, Monday to Friday, beginning 24th August – Friday 28th August. After this they will attend as part of their Bubble, on the same two days face-to-face, three days remote learning as other pupils.**
* **Two days face-to-face, three days remote learning will begin from Monday 31stAugust.**
* **Pupils in Bubble A will begin school on Monday 31st August, pupils in Bubble B will begin school on Thursday 3rd September.**
* **Pupils who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend school.**
* **Pupils living with someone who is shielding should only attend school, if they are able to stringently adhere to social distancing. The school needs to be informed of these pupils as soon as possible using the information email account** **info@smps.dunnamanagh.ni.sch.uk**

**An individual risk assessment will then need to be conducted for each of these pupils, before the most appropriate place of learning is determined.**

* **Pupils should wear their school uniform as normal.**
* **Pupils should not bring any school materials (school bags, pencils cases etc) from home to school, and at the end of the school day, not take anything from school to home. Lunch boxes and a bottle of water are the only items to be brought to school.**
* **Depending on transport information, we will have arrangements in place for entering and exiting the school. Parents will be informed of drop off/ collection points at school with possible staggered school start/end times to avoid too many people at the school gates and to promote social distancing; hence helping to control the COVID 19 virus.**
* **Parents are asked to respect social distancing and not congregate at the gates or school entrance. We intend to dismiss pupils to their parents from class lines in the school car-park – using a one-way system of in through the pedestrian gate, and out through one of the larger gates. Markings will be used to assist with this.**
* **As a means of preventing spread of the virus, parents are asked not to enter the school, without prior arrangement. Further guidance will follow.**
* **Depending on school meal information, we envisage continued use of our split lunch-time (same as last year). With split pupil numbers attending, this will continue to work effectively.**
* **To minimise potential spread of the virus, within each class, pupils will be assigned:**
	+ **designated seats;**
	+ **designated packs with pencils, rubbers, scissors etc for personal use;**
	+ **exercise books for use in school, exercise books for use at home – these books should not travel between home and school;**
	+ **to a ‘protective bubble’ – The Department of Health’s Test, Trace and Protect requires early identification, isolation and testing, tracing of close contacts. The bubbles will help the school manage circumstances where a member of staff or a child should develop symptoms while in the school setting. Once put in place, membership of ‘bubbles’ will not change;**
	+ **resources, such as play resources, maths resources will be allocated for use by particular bubbles; and**
	+ **other aspects will be put in place to mitigate the virus as and when appropriate. We all want to be safe.**
	+ **We are still working on how to manage Guided Reading and Accelerated Reading books;**
* **Children will wash their hands on arrival and regularly in the school using soap and water.**
* **Handsanitising will be available at the school entrance and at many points throughout the school.**
* **The previous approach of ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ will continue to be used, with pupils being encouraged to cough into their elbow if they don’t have a tissue. Tissues/paper towels will be disposed of into the nearest bin.**
* **Social distancing of two metres between staff and children will be maintained as much as possible.**
* **PPE will not be worn by children in school, but may be required during transport – we will await guidance.**

**All these points have been compiled by staff, in accordance with the DE, document ‘New School Day’. They have been drawn up, in our best efforts, to give you information of how we see the running of the school come September. Hopefully, it will give you some peace of mind knowing that we are doing our best to keep everyone safe and healthy. Please be aware that some of it may change will new/ different Government information.**

**Finally, I would like to say thank you to all of you for your support and co-operation during this unprecedented time in all our lives and wish you and all the children a safe summer.**

**Regards,**

**J Carlin(Mrs)**