St Michael’s PS, Dunnamanagh

17th March, 2021

Dear Parent,

Following the announcement yesterday, we are now thankfully at the stage of being able to re-open school once again, albeit cautiously, and with your help safely, for everyone involved. It is a year since we first went into lockdown and the children have had to cope with so much during that time.

Firstly, on behalf of staff, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to all parents for your support during the past ten weeks. We know it hasn’t been easy and we could never have managed without your help. The children’s learning during this term has only been possible because of the time and effort which you have put in. Many, many thanks.

School will reopen on **Monday 22nd March for all pupils**. There will be bus transport provided as normal. Canteen will be available as normal, although it may take a few days to have a menu set.

P6 Transfer Club will be on **Microsoft Teams on Monday 22nd at 3.30pm** but will revert to being in school on Monday 29th March, 3.15-4.15pm.

Here are some key points based on DE guidance. It is lengthy and is quite similar to the information that you received in September, but please read it to refresh your memory.

* **Social Distancing** – guidance is 2m between adults, and as far as possible between adults and children.
  + Pupils will be in bubbles. Guidance states a bubble will be made up of a whole class.
  + Pupils will be assigned a seat in the class and keep this seat for the foreseeable future. Pupils will as far as possible, sit facing the front of the room.
  + There will be a one-way system within the assembly hall and at entrance and exit of school grounds.
  + There will be staggered breaks to minimise the number of pupils in the playground at any one time.
* **Hygiene/ Physical Protection** –
  + On first day back, **Monday 22nd March**, pupils should bring their current workpacks to school, as it contains work prepared for this week.
  + Children will have their temperature checked on arrival at school. Then children will go straight to class and wash their hands. They will stay in class until school begins.
  + Children will wash their hands regularly throughout the school day.
  + Hand sanitiser will be available at the entrance to each classroom. Some pupils may choose to use their own sanitiser.
  + Tissues will also be available.
  + The previous approach of ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ will continue to be used, with pupils being encouraged to cough/ sneeze into their elbow if they don’t have a tissue. Tissues/paper towels will be disposed of into the nearest bin.
  + PPE should not be worn by children in school.
  + Pupils should wear their school uniform as normal.
  + On PE days, pupils should wear jogging bottoms, t-shirt and sweatshirt to school, as DE guidance does not allow for changing into PE gear in school. **In line with Safeguarding, please ensure children dress appropriately for PE in school. Shorts should not be worn to school.**
  + 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. **These should be clearly labelled with child’s name.**
  + There will be regular cleaning of door handles, desk tops etc throughout the day to minimise potential spread of the virus, within each class.
  + Pupils will have their designated packs refilled with pencils, rubbers, scissors etc for personal use, which will remain in school.
  + There will be exercise books for use in school, exercise books for use at home – these books should not travel between home and school. If pupils require a new exercise book for home, they should ask the teacher and it will supplied by the school.
* **Safety during current canteen refurbishment** 
  + As an increased precaution, the pedestrian gate will not be used whilst work is going on in the school kitchen. This pedestrian gate will remain closed. Pupils will enter/exit via the main gates.
* **Transport: Bus** –
  + Children should sit as sibling groups on the bus, or the same individual pupils sit together, keeping to the same seat arrangements as far as possible.
  + it is strongly recommended that all pupils regardless of age should wear a face covering in buses, where it is appropriate for them to do so and they are able to handle them as directed. Please ensure pupils have a mask with them each day.
  + It would greatly simplify matters if children wore a re-useable mask with their name on it.
  + It has always been from a safety basis that there should be no eating or drinking on the bus. This must be strictly adhered to.
  + A member of staff will be on duty to escort pupils into school from the bus on its arrival each morning.
  + At the end of the school day, pupils will line up in their bus lines at the front of the school and be escorted on to the bus by a member of staff.
* **Transport: Other than bus –**
  + Children arriving by car or on foot will enter the front entrance via the main gates. Parents are asked to leave their children at the gate and not enter the school grounds. There will be a member of staff on duty to supervise children’s entry into school.
* Parents are asked to respect social distancing and not congregate at the gates or school entrance.
* **School Meals –** 
  + We will continue with separate lunch-breaks for P1-4 and P5-7. P1-4 meals will be served in the dining hall, P5-7 will eat in the classrooms.
  + Children will remain in class bubbles during lunch-break.
  + **Money should be paid on Mondays, and brought to school in a sealed envelope with name and what the money is for, clearly labelled on the envelope. Correct money please, as change will not be given.**
  + A copy of the canteen menu will be put on the school website as soon as it becomes available.
  + Milk for morning break will be available from **after Easter**, more details later.
* **Curriculum Delivery –** 
  + We are thrilled to return to whole class teaching and welcoming all the children back to school.
  + Pupils should not bring school bags etc and homework will continue to be done using Google Classroom.
  + Homework will resume after the Easter holidays.
  + We will be resuming as many aspects of our whole school curriculum as possible, within the limits of Covid19 restrictions.
  + Emphasis will be put on RE and PATHS to help us address the well-being of all the children, as they adapt to the return to school, as well as outdoor play and PE.
* **School Attendance –**
  + **PUPILS SHOULD NOT ATTEND SCHOOL IF THEY OR A MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD IS SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19.** Parents are expected to follow PHA guidelines in this situation. Parents should also inform the school immediately by phone of this situation.
  + Please inform the school by phone if your child is absent for any other reason.
* **Showing symptoms -** 
  + If a child becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or high temperature/ fever/ loss of smell/ taste/ rash when in school, they and any other members of the same family will be sent home. Parents should follow PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.
  + A child awaiting collection will be moved to the designated space in the school, where they will be supervised by a member of staff. The child’s parent will be asked to come and collect their child.
  + Any parent arriving to pick up a sick child will be asked to come to the front door and ring the office controlled access button. A member of staff will then escort the sick child to the awaiting parent. Parents are asked not to enter the school.

I am aware that all of us are relieved, but still feeling cautious about the return to school. I hope this information will refresh our memories and help all of us to apply safe Covid19 measures in school.

Please continue to keep a close eye on the **school website** [**www.stmichaelsps.dunnamanagh.com**](http://www.stmichaelsps.dunnamanagh.com) **and app** as these will be our means of communication for all school information. If you need to speak to the class teacher or principal, please continue to contact us by telephoning the school, at appropriate times.

J Carlin (Mrs)

Principal