



SCOIL MHUIRE GAN SMÁL

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10/8/20

RE: Safe School Attendance and Physical Distancing

Dear Parent/Guardian/Staff Member,

The focus of this week's letter is to inform you of the following:

1. Safe School Attendance which will help to keep our school Covid-free so that, when we open, we can stay open.
2. How we will operate Physical Distancing.
3. The on-going work we are engaged in to enable us to re-open our school safely for pupils and staff.

Again, I emphasise that our planning is informed by Department of Education Guidelines.

Safe School Attendance:

It is of the utmost importance that our full school community works closely together to ensure that we can fully re-open and, most importantly, stay open.

Therefore, we respectfully request your full co-operation with the following:

- While all children will be welcome back to school, parents are reminded that children who are displaying colds, coughs or flu-like symptoms **SHOULD NOT** be sent to school.

(This regulation also applies to all staff.)

- Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents will be contacted to collect them immediately from the school. (We have identified 3 isolation rooms for pupils who become unwell.)

Pupils and staff who have travelled from countries not on the Green List **MUST 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 teachers will make our pupils aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing and coughing. We know we can also depend on you to continue emphasising safe behaviour in this regard as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Physical Distancing:

We are fortunate that our school was refurbished in 2010-11. As a result, we have spacious classrooms and numerous entry points.

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:

(a) Increasing Separation:

- Classroom layouts are being re-configured to maximise physical distancing.
- Each class will be referred to as **a bubble**.
- We aim to ensure that there will be as little contact as possible between different bubbles.
- Within the bubbles, children will be organised into **Pods**.
A pod will be a group of approx. 6 children.
They will stay in their pod while in the bubble (classroom).

(b) Decreasing Interaction:

- We will decrease the potential for children from different bubbles (classes) to interact.
- As we have 16 classes, there will be 16 bubbles.
- There will be 2 staggered start and finish times. (Details to follow.)
(Every effort will be made to give sisters the same start time so as to support parents.)
- 8 bubbles (classes) will arrive/leave at any one time.
Currently, pupils enter and leave through 5 doors.
This will be increased to 8 doors.
Each bubble (class) will be assigned 1 of the 8 doors to enter/leave the school, with only one bubble using a door at a time.
There will be marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms.
(In time, you will be informed of which door(s) your daughter(s) will use.)
- There will be staggered break and lunch times.
This will allow us to reduce the number of pupils mixing together.
- ***We aim to make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.***

On-going Work:

The following is some of the work being done this week:

- The entire water system in the school is being sanitised.

- The deep-clean of the school will be completed.
- Senior In-School Management will again meet to continue working on our Logistics Plan. This week's additional focus will be on drop-off and collection routines for parents.
- The Procurement List was issued to all schools at 5.13pm on Friday evening. We can now proceed with the procurement of hand sanitisers, dispensers and other necessary equipment.
- All staff will be contacted regarding the safety protocols required.

Our aim remains to re-open our school in an orderly, safe manner, while reassuring our pupils and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. We can achieve this by all of us working together and supporting one another for the benefit of all.

Kind regards,

Walter Lacey

Chairperson

Bernie Murphy

Principal