

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

We are delighted to reopen the school doors on August 31st to all pupils. We are extremely busy at present ensuring that all safety measures are in place for the safe return of our pupils, staff and school community. I will be in contact regularly with any updated information but at this present time I am going on the information and guidelines that we have been given by the Department of Education.

When we return we want to assure you and your child that we have an extensive cleaning routine and some small changes in place for everyone's health and safety. We must work in partnership to make sure we are all doing our best to keep the school community virus free.

- ❖ Under no circumstances should any pupil come to school if they are feeling unwell. Once the child has fully recovered they can return to school.
- ❖ Normal school uniform applies this year. The Dept. of Education has not issued any guidance around washing of uniforms. We ask parents to make sure that the uniform is not worn to any extra curricular activities and that the pupils change clothes as soon as they go home. This is to avoid cross contamination. School tracksuits can be worn on PE days as advised by class teacher. I will be in contact before we return with specific days for each class. School bags should be kept to the minimal amount of travel and only transfer between home and school
- ❖ Each child should have a fully stocked pencil case that is kept at home and a pencil case that is kept at school. The pencil cases should not be transferred daily.
- ❖ Lunchboxes should be washed every evening with warm soapy water or put through the dishwasher.
- ❖ Younger children should have lunchboxes that they can open and close themselves and fruit that is pre peeled.
- ❖ Each book and copy should be covered in clear plastic contact or a plastic cover in order to make these items "wipable".
- ❖ Each child should have their own facecloth kept in a plastic ziplock bag for drying their hands. The facecloth should be changed daily.
- ❖ We have three external doors in our building. These doors will be used for entry and exit doors for designated classes
Junior Infants and 1st and 2nd class will enter through the front door
3rd and 4th class will enter through the back door of the main building
Senior infants and 5th and 6th class will enter through the extreme back door in the extension (near prefab)
- ❖ We are not going to do a staggered drop off as this would be hugely inconvenient to parents. We are extending our entry time from 9.10-9.20 to 9.10-9.30. Parents are asked to park in the car park and walk their child across the road. There should be absolutely no congregating at the school gate or school wall. If there are a number of children entering the school at the same time please wait until it becomes quieter. Children will come straight into their classrooms where they will be met by their teacher.
- ❖ At home time children will be lined up in the yard and left out class by class so this might be a little slow at first but please have patience with us!

- ❖ The words “pods” and “bubbles” are the new key words in primary classrooms. The “bubble” is the classroom e.g. in our school 1st and 2nd class are in one room and they are the class bubble. Within this bubble we have “pods”. The pods are groups of children sitting together. Class bubbles are not allowed to mix e.g. 1st and 2nd class bubble is not allowed to mix with 3rd and 4th class bubble. The Department of Education have been quite clear on this as the more groups mix the more difficult contract tracing would become. Pupils from junior infants to second class do not have to social distance but children from 3rd to 6th class must be 1metre apart in their pods. The children in 3rd to 6th can sit together in their pod but the pods must be 1 metre apart. To ensure further safety we are installing Perspex screens in the 3rd to 6th class rooms.
- ❖ Playground- each class will be designated a different area of the playground. We are introducing split breaks so only half the classes will be on break at any given time.
- ❖ Parents are more than welcome to ring the school or make an appointment to speak to a teacher in advance. Following government advice parents are any other visitor is not permitted into the school without prior approval. We urge you to contact us with any concern no matter how big or small to still contact us and we can arrange a meeting/telephone call.

- ❖ We have signage, hand sanitizer at every door, warm water and soap in each bathroom and extensive cleaning measures in place. We are following Department of Education guidelines on the safe and sustainable return to primary school. All checklists and policies are being worked on at present. Children are not required to supply their own hand sanitizer however if there are skin conditions that may not tolerate standard sanitizer please contact me to make alternative arrangements. Children at primary school level are not required to wear face masks.

There may seem to be a lot of information in this letter but in reality we will try to keep everything as normal, safe and calm as possible for our pupils return. We hope that the pupils are excited and not anxious about returning to school. We are all in this together. Please contact me if you have any further queries on gnsgerardine@gmail.com.

Kind Regards,

Gerardine Shanahan

Principal

Gneeveguilla N.S.