



St. Francis Junior School Priorswood Dublin 17



## **Guidelines and Information for the Safe Return of Children to School September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021** **Please visit our website regularly as it will keep you up to date with school information**

If we all work together and follow the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, the HSE and our Patron we hope that our school can remain open whilst COVID-19 still rages.

Many parents/guardians are aware of our protocols and guidelines as they have children attending our school.

Our school is a 'living place' and this is a 'living document' so changes and amendments may be made as the days, weeks and months unfold.

### **Return to School Declaration Form**

All pupils must have this form filled in for their return to school September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. Your child's teacher will hand out forms on your child's first day in school. If a completed form is not returned your child will not be allowed to attend school until it is.

### **Contact**



We must have **2 working mobile/phone numbers** for each child so that within minutes of a concern a parent/guardian can be contacted by a member of the school staff.

If we have two numbers which don't work or are not answered we may have to ring the **Gardaí / Ambulance and or /HSE** as everyone's health and safety is important and we want to keep our school open for the rest of the year.

**All adults who enter the school grounds** must wear **a face mask / face covering**, which covers the nose and mouth. If due to medical reasons you cannot wear a mask you must wear a visor. If you cannot wear either another member of your family will have to represent you at the school, as **a FACE COVERING is MANDATORY on all school grounds.**

### **Arrival / Dismissal Protocols: WE HAVE STRICT GUIDELINES**

**Many schools don't allow parents/guardians on school grounds.**

We do because our parents/guardians follow our protocols and guidelines. *However, if they are not being followed the Board of Management will have to revise in the health and safety interest of staff and pupils.*

**School starts at 8.50am.** Teachers / SNAs will be in the alcove/at door ready to welcome your child and sanitize their hands. Please make sure that hands are clean, as sanitiser doesn't work on dirty hands.

As all staff will be teaching and busy from 8.50am you will have to wait outside the main door with your child and join the queue at the main door *if you arrive after 8.50am. We don't have enough staff to do 'porter' duty.*

- Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of COVID-19 or who have served the required quarantine time advised are allowed to drop off and collect children.
- Any parent/guardians/carer who is in a high risk category should not drop off or collect children in order to protect themselves. (This of course is at the discretion of the adult)
- **Please do not to congregate in groups** or stand around chatting before and after dropping off your child. Adults must take responsibility for their own and their child's social distancing whilst lining up etc. Parents/Guardians leave the school grounds as soon as their child is in his/her classroom.
- Parents/Guardians must try to ensure their child remains at their side at all times and that their child does not interact with other children.
- If a parent has more than one child the other children stay with them until the first child is handed over at the classroom door, or if in 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> they can walk by themselves to their teacher

\*\*\*No parent/guardian is permitted to cross 'the white line' at the alcoves\*\*\*

**Junior and Senior Infants** will exit the school at their outside classroom door at 1.30pm. The class teacher will line up the pupils inside the classroom whilst their parents/guardians **line up outside past the white line and 2meters apart.** (*Parents/Guardians must ensure their own social distancing whilst waiting on school grounds.*) The class teacher will then 'release' each child, one at a time, when their parent/guardian is at the pick-up point.

**1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes** will line up at their designated area at 2.30pm (different than morning for 1<sup>st</sup> Classes). They will wait in their line until they are picked up by parent/guardian. (Parents/Guardians must ensure their own social distancing whilst waiting on school grounds.) *If parents/guardians are late the child will wait in the alcove area, outside their own classroom, not inside the main door like last year, until collected.*

### **Uniforms / Shoes and Shoelaces**

- Children's uniforms need to be clean and washed regularly. This is in line with current health advice.
- Please try and have a spare tracksuit so that you can wash the uniform regularly.
- Teachers are not permitted to tie shoelaces due to this pandemic. Please ensure your child's shoe laces are tied securely or that they have Velcro fastening shoes. Otherwise they'll trip when running around outside.

## **Lunch / Food We have a Healthy Food Policy**

- Carambola is our food supplier. Details are on our website, in School Info. Please contact our HSCL teacher, Ms. Chaney, if you have any problems using their website. It can feel a bit complicated.
- This year all children will be getting a hot lunch as well as a snack. Please change your child's menu if they don't like their lunch. Please contact our HSCL teacher, Ms. Chaney if you're stuck!
- If your child has a lunch box make sure they can open it by themselves.
- **Room 13:** A child has a nut and egg allergy. **Absolutely no food/snacks with nuts allowed in the room.**

## **Use of Face masks / Face Coverings for Children:**

The wearing of facemasks by children in a junior school is not currently mandated or recommended by the DES / HSE. However, if any parent/guardian wants their child to wear a face covering they are free to do so.

## **Playtime / Yardtime**

- Each class has recess in their own designated play area.
- Break times will be staggered whilst the pandemic rages. Junior and Senior infants will share break times but they will not play/mix with each other. They will only play with their own class.  
1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes will share break times but they will not play /mix with each other.

## **If a child becomes unwell during the school day with COVID-19 symptoms**

- A staff member who is 'freed up' will deal with the situation
- The child's parent/guardian will be immediately contacted and asked to come to the school to take the child either to the doctor or home. The handover will take place at the main door.
- A mask will be given to the child to wear until he/she is picked up. A member of school staff will remain with the child until he/she is picked up.
- Dedicated waste bins will be in use.
- The staff member caring for the child in the isolation area should wear personal protective equipment i.e. face mask, disposable apron and gloves.
- The child will be encouraged not to touch surfaces, people or any objects.
- Public transport of any kind should not be used by the parent to take the child home.
- Appropriate cleaning and disinfection of the isolation area and the child's desk area will be carried out immediately.
- The principal and the DLW will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form any part of follow up actions.
- The principal will inform the HSE in line with correct protocols.

### **'Absence Reasons' from School**

If your child is absent due to COVID-19 ( close contact, awaiting test, awaiting test results ) please hand in the GP/ HSE letter or text the appointment time / result / details to Ms. Chaney **086 014 0321** so that we can mark your child's absence as COVID ENFORCED. We must have evidence to input this detail. This means that these 'COVID ENFORCED ABSENCE DAYS' will not be included in your child's general absence days. Our school email is [stfrancisjs17@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancisjs17@gmail.com) if you need to email.

Any child absent due to COVID-19 cannot return to the classroom until *The Return to School Declaration Form* is completed by parent/guardian. You can pick it up from the office.

Apart from being absent from school due to COVID-19 (which has to be supported by GP or Health Carer letter) all children are expected to attend school regularly. TUSLA and EWS have to be informed when a child is missing unexplained days from school. When he/she is 20 + days absent from school, TUSLA and EWS engage with the parent / guardians and the school.

### **If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in school**

- The school will be contacted by local Public Health staff of the HSE to discuss the case. They will identify people who have been in contact with the person and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- An assessment will be undertaken by HSE public health staff. They take the lead in this instance.
- Advice on the management of children and staff who came into contact with the person will be based on this assessment.

### **Children in High Risk Groups:**

\*Parents should seek advice from their GP/Specialist if they think their child is in a high risk group.

\*They must make an informed decision if it is safe for their child to return to school on September 1st.

\*They should inform the principal of the advice given, and give the school confirmation in writing from their child's GP or Health Care Professional that their child cannot attend school.

### **Children's learning environment:**

- As per DES guidelines children in junior schools do not have to adhere to the 2m /1m socially distancing rules. However, we will endeavour to safeguard the safety of everyone in our school.
- All classrooms and all areas of the school have been cleaned for our return on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Staff will wear masks and will be diligent about following protocols
- Interaction between classes is nil

- Classrooms are ventilated. We're lucky to have big classrooms and lots of windows
- Class equipment and resources will be cleaned regularly
- Pupils will hand sanitise/ wash hands after yard time
- The sharing of materials/resources will be minimal
- Desks, door handles, toilets will be cleaned regularly

Teachers will attempt to have PE classes and SPHE classes outside as much as possible

### **What if my child has access to an SNA?**

Children who have access to an SNA will continue to have access. However, in line with Government guidelines the SNA will be wearing a mask and will sanitize and clean regularly.

### **What if my child has access to Learning Support or has SEN?**

Your child will continue to receive support. This support may take place in your child's classroom or in the SET teacher's room. Because we have only 4 SET teachers to share amongst 11 classes we need to safeguard their and the pupils' safety. Staff will be super cautious about hand and respiratory hygiene and social distancing. To ensure the safety of our school environment, safety measures must be adhered to by staff and pupils and all who enter our grounds

### **Responsibilities for Parents/Guardians to ensure a safe return to school:**

- Please ensure that you have taught your child again, how to *cough and sneeze correctly*
- Please ensure that your child can *open /close his/her lunch box, coat, bag and shoes*
- Please ensure that all of your child's equipment/books/copies are *labelled with the child's name* as equipment/books cannot be shared.
- Parents must ensure that *all books/writing equipment/lunch boxes/water bottles are sanitised* using alcohol wipes or appropriate cleaner on completion of homework before being placed in the child's schoolbag.
- Please ensure that your child has *all his/her supplies each morning*
- Please *wash your child's hands before they come to school* each morning
- Please encourage your child to *go to the toilet before they leave for* school in the morning

### **Children staying in from 'yard' because they are sick and not feeling well**

Unfortunately, we cannot allow children to stay on the corridor outside the principal's office whilst break time is on, as this would involve the mixing of classes which we must avoid.

*If your child is unwell they should not be sent to school.*

## **Collecting children early *before the school day is over*:**

*Please don't take your child out of school unless it's for an important medical or health appointment.*

If you must take your child out of school during the day ring the school in the morning so that we are prepared. Your child will walk from the classroom to the front door to meet you there. Unfortunately, we don't have spare staff to escort children through the school.

## **Contacting School Staff: Principal, Deputy, A Teacher, HSCL**

- Parents/Guardians/Carers will not be able to access the school building without an appointment
- Ring the office [01 847 0804](tel:018470804) to make an appointment if you wish to speak with a member of staff.
- Our school email address is: [stfrancisjs17@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancisjs17@gmail.com). We may not be able to reply immediately, but we will reply.
- Please contact our HSCL teacher, MsChaney, [086 014 0321](tel:0860140321) / [hsc1stfrancisjs17@gmail.com](mailto:hsc1stfrancisjs17@gmail.com) if you have any worries or queries.
- Main Door: We have an intercom system. Margaret, our secretary, will be able to speak with you via it. She will not be able to give you access to the building unless it's an emergency.

## **Routines & Homework & School Bags**

Staff will reintroduce the children to the routines that were introduced last September: hand washing, hand sanitizing, good respiratory etiquette, trying not to hug each other, lining up, not sharing supplies etc

The children will have no *written* homework upon their return to school this month.

Teachers will be focus on reviewing, revising and consolidating as well as introducing new learning in the classroom.

Oral Language both in English ( speaking in complete sentences ) and Gaeilge will be emphasised.

The importance of Well-being and Positive Mental Health will be highlighted. We want all the children to feel comfortable, safe and secure in school, and we want them to be able to express their feelings, emotions through learning and activities both in the classroom and on the playground.

## **After School Activities**

We had some fabulous After School Activities last year for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and classes were kept as pods. Ms. Chaney is hoping that if we can secure funding and when 'things' settle down we can start again.

Please keep looking at our website as we will update it regularly as routines change and Department of Education and Skills and HSE guidelines change. The above 'guidelines' could change at a moment's notice!

We're all really looking forward to seeing our senior infants, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes again and meeting all our new junior infants, along with some new pupils who have moved to our area.

We are a great team in St. Francis Junior School as parents/guardians, teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff , pupils, Fr. Bryan, Board of Management and local community groups work together creating a positive, welcoming and warm environment, where everyone is valued and respected, and self-growth is as important as academic progress.

Stay safe and try not to feel too sad and lonely as you think about 'waving good-bye' this week!!

*Sincerely,*

*A. Plunkett, Principal*