



Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you and your families are all well after the Summer holidays. We look forward to welcoming all of our pupils back to St. Colmcille's JNS on Monday 31st August and of course, a very special welcome to our incoming Junior Infant pupils.

I know, of course, there is great anxiety and worry as we prepare for the new School term but working together with the Board of Management, School Leadership team, parents, and staff we will provide a safe space for your child to prosper, grow and develop. Every effort is being made to ensure a safe, happy, and nurturing environment for your child here at St. Colmcille's JNS.

The Department of Education and Skills **"COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of Primary and Special Schools"** is available to read on our school website. We have also published our **"COVID-19 Policy Statement"** on the school website.

The Response Plan gives details of:

- Physical preparation, signage, hand sanitiser stations.
- Advice, procedures and training for the safe return to working in the school for all school staff and pupils.
- General advice on how all pupils, staff, parents and visitors will prevent the spread of the virus.

Logistics

Please find attached the new Arrival & Collection Schedule. We will continue to monitor our procedures and arrangements and some details may be subject to change. You will be notified in advance of any changes. Please note your child's specific starting and finishing times. There are staggered times to avoid clusters of parents/ children forming outside the school and we would ask you to vacate the school grounds as soon as possible. Take note of your child's access door and your child's collection point. As you will see, there is a ONE-WAY system in operation for both drop-off and collection and it is important that we all follow this. We ask for your co-operation as it will be vital to the smooth running of this system.

Please discuss the return to school with your children and explain the morning drop off routine with them. Explain that the class teacher will take over after drop off.

Please be aware that there will be no after-school activities for the moment. This arrangement will be reviewed again over the coming months.

School Grounds

- Walking to school is strongly encouraged.
- Please follow the one-way system we have in place. There will be directional arrows and signs in place.
- Explain to your child the importance of having this system in place.

- Parents are asked to drop their children at their designated area and vacate the School grounds as soon as possible. Children will sanitise their hands at entry points. If you are dropping more than one child please drop the first child and follow the system as appropriate.
- For Health and Safety reasons there will be a one-way pedestrian system and there will be no access for cars on the school grounds until further notice. Both car parks will be strictly for staff only.
- Please drop your child and exit as quickly as possible.
- Please keep 2 metres apart at all times.
- Punctuality is extremely important. Please ensure that children are at school at their designated time.
- Dress for the weather. It's a good idea to have rain gear to hand particularly at collection time from the bottom yard.
- Teachers will go through these new routines with their classes so that the children are very clear about them.

Access to School

- Parents who enter the school building must wear appropriate face coverings at all times and sanitise appropriately. All visitors and parents must sign in and out in a log book provided for contact tracing purposes.
- If office queries can be dealt with by phone or email please ring/write rather than attend the office in person.
- If parents wish to meet teachers throughout the school term they must do so by appointment only. Appointments can be made through the office.

Children Displaying Symptoms

- If your child is sick or presenting with any COVID 19 like symptoms please follow all HSE guidelines and do not send your child to School.
- When a child presents sick in School he/she will be brought to a designated isolation area by class teacher/SNA. Parents will be notified and your child should be collected as soon as possible. Please ensure your contact details are up to date with the office staff.
- If you or any member of your family have been identified by the HSE as being in contact with a COVID 19 case or indeed have contracted COVID 19 please do not allow your child to attend school and notify us immediately.
- **Guidelines from HSE and Department of Education & Skills state as part of the Return to Schools protocols that students returning to school should not travel outside of Ireland up to two weeks before the return date. Please be aware that if they do so they will need to self-isolate for two weeks before they can return to school, in our case on Monday 31st August.**
- We are all in this together, we can only keep safe if everyone follows the rules.

Classroom Set-up

- Your child's classroom has been reconfigured so that each group of tables (Pods) are at least 1m away from the next one. Each class will be treated as a Bubble. Contact with other classes will be kept to a minimum and yard times will be staggered also.
- To minimise the swapping of materials we ask that no toys should be brought to School during this time.
- Junior school children are not required to wear face coverings.

School Books and Stationery

- The school will supply a small storage box for each child for books and stationery.
- Pupils will add their first day books, stationery - including colouring pencils etc as listed on the booklist, to this box.
- Items in this box will be for the sole use of your child and no items from this box will go home.

Lunches

- Please ensure your child brings their lunch & drinks bottle to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day.
- Parents are asked to remind their child not to share their food or drinks with other children.
- Parents are asked to ensure that their child's lunch box, bottles and other lunch utensils are thoroughly cleaned before sending into the school.
- Please ensure your child's lunch box and drink bottles are clearly labelled.

Lost & Found

We will no longer be able to facilitate a Lost & Found Property service. Please ensure that all clothes and belongings are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Hygiene & Sanitising

- Automatic hand sanitiser dispensers are located at all entry points. There are ample sanitising stations throughout the school but we would ask that all children have sanitiser in their bags and are familiar with how to use it. Ensure that your child knows how to follow good respiratory hygiene.
- Extra cleaning staff have been employed to clean and sanitise common touch points throughout the school day.

For the first morning we would like, if possible, if all children would wear a label with their name and class teacher on it. This is to assist staff with directing children to their entrance doors and classrooms. Perhaps you could design a special one together.....

A new COVID 19 team has been set up to monitor and evaluate the continued effort to keep our pupils and staff safe in School. Further documents and resources will be available to access on the Returning to School_ Covid tab on the school website https://www.stcolmcillesjns.com/returning-to-school_covid-19.html. There will be route maps uploaded onto the website in the coming days, outlining entry and collection points for all standards.

We are all conscious of the fact that some or all of these measures may cause anxiety/ worry to both pupils and parents, but talk to your child regularly about the need, importance and the reasons behind this 'new normal'. In spite of all of this it is our aim to ensure that our young pupils can still enjoy an atmosphere of joy and fun whilst still staying safe.

Finally, thank you all so much for your continued co-operation and support.

Yours sincerely,

David Curtin,

Principal.