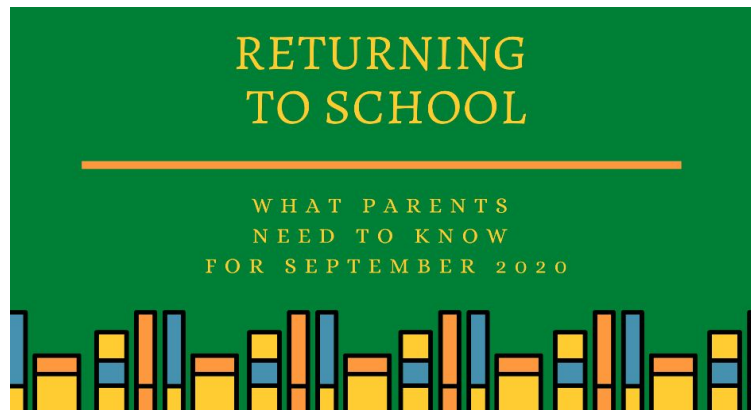


# St. Patrick's National School

Edmonton, Killucan, Co. Westmeath

Roll Number: 08100U

Tel: 044 93 74411



On 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the Department of Education and Skills published guidelines for reopening schools. You can find all the published documents [here](#).

## **What's happening?**

School will be a bit different this year, especially at the beginning, but the children will get used to it very quickly. Explain to your child that things will be a bit different, but try not to let them know that you are overly worried. Children pick up on your stress. Show them the video which will be sent to you next Friday about what the restart will look like; as many times as you need to.

Keep an eye on your school's website (Covid-19 section), Aladdin and/or Facebook page for updates. We have been busy preparing return policies and getting the interior of the school ready following substantial construction this summer.

Check that the school has your correct contact details. Please update your address, email or phone number on the Aladdin App if you have changed any details. Check that your emergency contact details are up to date. All of these can be updated **by you at home** via the App or by logging in to Aladdin on your computer.

## **Contents:**

- What you can do to prepare
- Drop-off and collection
- Cleaning
- Physical Distancing and face coverings
- Hand Hygiene

*Principal: Martin Hanly*  
*edmontonns@gmail.com*  
*www.edmontonns.ie*

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- School Bags and Lunches
- Communication with Teachers
- Teacher Absences
- Starting Junior Infants
- Children with Support Needs
- Very high-risk pupils
- Suspected cases of COVID-19

## **What You Can Do to Prepare**

- Practice washing hands properly with your child, with soap, for 20 seconds. Make sure that your child also knows how to dry their hands thoroughly. (See here to view recommended hand-washing method <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/ee0781-covid-19-posters-for-public-use/#hand-washing>)
- Children should also know how to use hand-sanitizer correctly, and that it should not be ingested.
- Teach your child correct cough and sneeze etiquette. Cough or sneeze into a tissue, or into your elbow if you do not have a tissue. Put the tissue in the bin and wash or sanitize your hands immediately.
- Make sure that your child can INDEPENDENTLY open and close their lunchbox and bottle, their coat, and their shoes. Shoes with laces are not recommended for younger children. **Teachers will not be tying laces this year. Velcro is preferable.**
- Ensure all items within your child's lunchbox can be independently opened/peeled by your child eg. oranges, bananas, yogurts, bottles, packets etc. Teachers will not be able to assist as in previous years in order to try to maintain as much physical distance as possible.
- Ensure that your child has their own lunch in their bag and not the lunch of their sibling; children will not be able to visit other rooms to swap with their siblings.
- Please ensure that your child has their own drink each day. Children will not be able to use and share cups in school, nor will they be able to go to their sibling's classroom to get a drink.

## **Drop-off and Collection**

- Schools must "limit interaction on arrival and departure from school."

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- Refer to the previous letter with drop off details. See the new [Covid-19 section of our website](#) for previous communications. Read the letter carefully and explain it to your child.
- Watch the video that will be emailed to you on Friday 28th August to view the morning drop off routine for your own information, and for your child.

## Cleaning

- Cleaning in schools will be increased considerably. Schools have been given a budget for the extra cleaning and cleaning materials required.
- Each classroom will be cleaned daily.
- An Environmental Cleaning Policy has been developed and ratified by the Board of Management.
- Resources will be provided for children individually where possible, or shared with their 'pod'. Resources that are shared between classes will be cleaned between use eg. Chromebooks
- Books, toys and resources will be cleaned regularly or quarantined for 72 hours before being reused.
- Older children (2nd class upwards) will be asked to wipe down their table and chair at the end of every day.
  
- School bags and lunch boxes will be sanitised each morning and coats then placed inside the bag. (watch next Friday's video for this routine). The same procedure will apply at home time. Extra time will be provided to prepare for the home time routine.

## Physical Distancing

- Parents remain at least 2m from each other in the car park. Ideally, parents should remain in their car and have kisses/hugs done at home as much as possible. This is not the time nor place for a chat.
- Children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class are not required to physically distance. Children from 3rd-6th class are expected to keep a distance of 1m where possible. Where this is not possible the class group will be treated as a class bubble/pod.
- Each class will be a 'Bubble'. Contact between bubbles will be extremely limited and break times will be staggered to allow for this.
- Classes will be divided into groups, or 'Pods'. These children will sit, work and play together. They will stay in the same pod for a number of weeks.

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- In senior classrooms, siblings may be required to sit beside each other in the same pod where physical distancing of 1m is not possible.
- Staff will try to maintain physical distance from children where practical and when they can. Staff will wear face coverings and other PPE when needed.
- When administering First Aid staff will be wearing PPE for eg. nose bleeds, asthma attacks, head injuries.
- Children attending Primary School are not required to wear face coverings according to the latest guidance. *If you wish* for your child to wear a face covering in school, or any other PPE, that will be respected and will not be an issue. You must supply your child with the face covering/PPE in this instance. This issue is very topical at the moment but the school will follow current advice and you have the option to have your child wear face coverings/visor.
- Pupils will be permitted to mix with pupils within their bubble on yard. Each class bubble will be kept separate from other class bubbles. Zones will be marked on the yard. During the final construction phase there will be very limited space for playing. The usual football, chasing, basketball etc. will not be happening. Once this final phase of construction is complete, and prefabs removed and the new lawn is matured, play space will be back to normal. Break times will be fresh air times for the foreseeable future. Prepare your child for this change in advance.
- Footballs from home or toys on a Friday are not permitted until further notice. The school will plan a method of distributing some equipment to bubbles safely.
- Teachers will bring their class out for numerous stretch breaks during the day when no other classes are present on the yard. This will provide some well needed emotional release!

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## Hand Hygiene



- Children will perform hand hygiene regularly during the school day:
  - on arrival at school
  - before eating or drinking
  - after using the toilet
  - after a cough or sneeze
  - after playing outdoors
  - when hands are physically dirty
  - after using any shared equipment (e.g PE, Art tools)
- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be installed throughout the school.
- Each child should have their own supply of hand sanitiser and tissues to minimise movement within the classroom.

## School-bags, Lunches, Uniforms

- The government has not given any guidelines regarding these items but a common-sense approach should be followed.
- Ensure that your child does not have any unnecessary items from home such as toys in their school-bag.
- Choose lunchboxes, bottles that are easy to clean, as they will need to be cleaned daily in warm soapy water. The exterior of lunch boxes will be wiped upon arrival to class each morning.

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- All wrappers, peels, crusts etc. will be brought home each day. School bins will be used solely for the disposal of hand drying towels.
- The school will provide individual stationery and resources for each child (especially in the junior classes). If items from home arrive into school, children will be asked to place them in their school bag and leave them at home that afternoon.
- School books will not be going home for the month of September and this will then be reviewed.
- No guidance has been issued regarding uniforms. Children wearing in a clean uniform should be the norm. A combination of tracksuit one day and shirt trouser/pinafore the following day is acceptable or a clean tracksuit each school day is also acceptable. This should provide flexibility for you to clean and dry your child's uniform regularly.

## **Communication with Teachers**

- Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building without a prior appointment. Please email or phone the school to arrange the appointment. Homework journal usage is being reviewed and a journal will not be in use during September at least.
- Appointments may be made to visit the school for essential purposes. A contact tracing log will need to be filled out for each visit.
- We aim to have Aladdin set up so individual communication with your child's class teacher can happen digitally from infants to 2nd class. This will probably be extended from 3rd-6th class as well.

## **Teacher Absences**

- The Irish National Teachers' Organisation and Irish Primary Principals Network have put pressure on the Department of Education on the issue of substitute teachers. Supply panel clusters of substitute teachers are being set up to increase substitute availability. However, this will most likely be insufficient and issues will arise for schools trying to locate substitute teachers.
- Teachers will be unable to attend school if he/she has any flu or cold-like symptoms.

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- If the school is unable to secure a substitute teacher, the school may use a non-mainstream teacher to cover the absence. (This includes Support Teachers and administrative principals).
- Classes will not be split and placed in another classroom for supervision.
- If a substitute teacher cannot be located and the school's support teachers are already supervising another class the class for which no supervision can be arranged will not be in school that day (s) until supervision can be arranged. We aim to provide as much notice as possible as I understand how disruptive this would be.

## Starting Junior Infants

- On Tuesday morning 1st September junior infants will begin their first day of school. On that morning parents may walk their child to a zone at the rear of the prefab.
- Parents must remain 2m apart from all other adults in that zone.
- Ms. Egerton will collect the children from you here and the boys and girls will walk into their classroom.
- Parents are not permitted to enter the classroom or congregate near the entrance/windows of this room unlike previous years.
- We ask that you kiss and hug your child when the class teacher arrives and encourage them to walk in with their peers.
- If your child needs more time with you that is fine. Please remain in the zone and walk your child to the door from where the teacher will bring them into their room.
- There will be no refreshments for parents of junior infants this year.
- Junior infants will have Ms. Egerton all to themselves for Tuesday and Wednesday. This will be a cosy, safe and fun start to their primary school life.
- Rest assured, the Junior Infant teacher and other school staff will do their best to make sure that every child feels happy and safe at school. We have plenty of experience of dealing with nerves and tears! And that's just the parents!
- The benefits of play are well-documented, and infant teachers are very aware of this. Lots of time will be spent playing and listening to stories. The number one priority for the first few months of school will be the children's well-being.

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## Children with Support Needs

- The Support Education Team (Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Hanly) in your child's school will make sure that your child's needs are catered for to the best of their ability.
- Support Teachers may be required to cover for mainstream teachers in the case of their absence when a substitute teacher is not available. This may mean that your child may have reduced support at times, but the school will do their best to avoid this happening.
- Support teachers may be required to supervise pupils when being isolated in the isolation rooms.
- The successful support implemented in the school last year will be different this year. We will be in touch with parents of children in receipt of in class/withdrawal support.

## Very high-risk pupils

Pupils at very high, or high, risk may not be able to return to school. These pupils will receive appropriate support to engage with learning. Ongoing connection with the classmates and school community will be ensured.

*The list of people in very high risk groups includes people who:*

- o are over 70 years of age - even if fit and well
- o have had an organ transplant
- o are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- o are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- o have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- o are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- o are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- o have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppressive drugs
- o have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- o have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)

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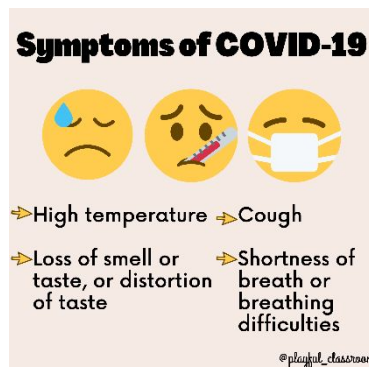
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- o are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppressive therapies)
- o have a serious heart condition and are pregnant
- Please inform the school immediately if your child is within the above group. A supporting letter from your child's consultant will be required.

## Suspected Cases of COVID-19

### *Symptoms of COVID-19*

- o High temperature
- o Cough
- o Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- o Loss of smell or taste, or distortion of taste



- Children should **NOT ATTEND** school if they are unwell or if any members of their household are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Childrens' temperatures will not be taken on arrival to school as per current guidelines. A child's temperature will only be checked if the teacher suspects they are unwell.
- If any pupil becomes unwell while at school, they will be brought to an isolation room (two rooms have been identified: First Aid room beside Ms. mcEntegart's room and the Art Room beside Ms. Slevin's room) and given a mask to wear. Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately to collect their child as soon as possible. Staff will wear PPE during this supervision time with a suspected case. The room will then be disinfected as per cleaning guidelines.

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- As explained in previous communication prompt collection of ill children will be expected. You should have a Plan B in place for instances where you cannot collect your child from school.
- The HSE will inform any parents/guardians of children who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case.
  
- The HSE will contact the school if a positive Covid-19 case is diagnosed within the school community. The HSE will then advise the school on measures to take. Until that contact is made the school cannot comment on whether pods or a class/classes or the school will be closed. This will be dealt with on a case by case basis is the current advice for school management.

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