

St. Patrick's National School

Edmonton, Killucan, Co. Westmeath Roll Number: 08100U Tel: 044 93 74411

January 2021 Newsletter

Happy New Year to everybody and I hope you all enjoyed the Christmas celebrations.

It feels like we have gone back in time to March 2020 all over again! I am glad we sent home a selection of books in December but I wish we didn't have to use them.

Alas, I am writing this newsletter to you to explain as best I can the procedures for remote learning starting on Monday the 11th of January at 9:20 a.m.

Remote learning will take the same format as it did from March 2020 to June 2020. The school will be using a combination of Seesaw and Google Classroom.

This year we will attempt to hold a daily and sometimes twice-daily Google Meet with certain classes (more details below).

This is and will be a very challenging time for all of us in so many different ways. At this time the whole school community must help each other as best we can. We must also be understanding, patient and kind to each other.

I am keenly aware of the issues families face at this time. I have already spoken to many parents this week regarding their concerns. If you and your child cannot attend remote learning or can only complete some of the assigned tasks that is fine. If your child completes no activities there will be no judgment and we will try to help your child as best we can once school reopens.

There will be technical issues ahead, there will be teething issues ahead and there will be fraught nerves ahead. Your child may "act up" in the weeks ahead or refuse to complete work. Is there anything else he/she could do other than school work being set.? We are going to try and post some alternative activity ideas on the school's FaceBook page regularly. As an incentive you may take a picture of your child completing one of these tasks

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and send to the class teacher. Your child's wellbeing, and your own, are just as important as academic work during this time.

Remote Learning Details

1. For children in junior infants, senior infants and first class Seesaw will be used. Children in the infant classroom will be familiar with Seesaw already. Children in first class will also have been familiar with Seesaw when they were students in the senior infant classroom during the closure of March to June 2020. I will be releasing login details and passwords to first class parents again before Monday. First class children have been using Google Classroom on a weekly basis since September however I feel their skill set is not developed enough to solely rely on Google classroom during this current period of remote learning. Therefore, children in first class will use Seesaw which they are already familiar with. If your child is already using Seesaw for other reasons in other class groupings they may continue to do so. 3 tutorials which were developed by Miss Egerton will be released to first class parents again so you can revise how this particular app works.
2. Children from second class all the way to sixth class will be using Google Classroom.
3. Homework will be released each morning at 9:20 a.m.. This work will be released on the Aladdin Homework section and on Seesaw/Google Classroom.
4. Starting on Tuesday morning teachers will be holding a short Google Meet with children, who are available to attend, to see how they are doing and to discuss the work being released to them on that particular day. This will be for children in 2nd-6th class only and it will be conducted within Google Classroom.
 - Infant Google Meets - Fridays - 1.20-2 p.m.
 - 1st class Google Meets - Thursday 11 a.m.
 - 2nd class Google Meets - daily from Tuesday 12th at 9.40 a.m. and 2.15 p.m.
 - 3rd/4th class Google Meets - daily from Tuesday 12th at 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

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- 5th/6th class Google Meets - daily from Tuesday 12th at 9.50 a.m. and 2 p.m.
5. Children in the infant room will have a Google Meet with their class teacher each Friday at 1.20 p.m. The infant Google Meet will take the format of a show and tell session.
6. Children in first class will hold a Google Meet with their class teacher each Thursday at 2 p.m.. This Meet will be a check in with the boys and girls to see how they are doing and if they have any queries or questions or stories to share with their teacher and their classmates who login.
7. Children in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class will have twice-daily Google Meets. Teacher will see how they are doing each morning and explain the work being assigned to them for that day. In the afternoon the teacher will meet with the children virtually again to answer any queries or questions the children might have about that day's work.
8. These Google Meets are for the children to maintain a connection with their teacher and their classmates. We also hope these Meets will allow the children to ask any questions about the work assigned directly to the teacher. These Meets are not parent-teacher meetings and any queries a parent has relating to their child's learning should be directed in the normal channels i.e. by email or telephone call. The teacher will then make direct, private contact with you to discuss your query.
9. After a few days of remote learning teachers will be in a better position to gauge the volume of work to assign to the children remotely and teachers will be able to gauge the number of children who are logging on each day for remote learning. Once teachers have gauged these levels work will then be released for a complete week in advance. We hope this will allow parents to plan more easily which work can be done on which days.
10. Teachers will not be assigning Gaeilge work for the children to complete. This decision was made following the feedback from parents during the parental survey conducted in April/May 2020.
11. Teachers will not be able to differentiate work to the same degree as they would with children physically present in their classroom. A set amount of work will be prepared daily. There will also be some work

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which is designed for children to complete if they feel, or you feel, they need more work to complete eg. learning logs of other tasks completed, project work assigned. If your child has completed all the supplementary work suggested they may complete other tasks and send a photo to the teacher. We aim to upload some alternative tasks to the school's FaceBook page regularly.

12. If you are using a tablet to complete work on Seesaw please make sure you have the Seesaw app correctly downloaded. If you are using a tablet to access Google Classroom you will need to download the Google Classroom app, Google Docs app and the Google Meet app. For Classroom to work correctly you will need to sign out of any other Gmail accounts before your child logs in.

Since the Minister for Education and Skills announced that schools would be moving to remote learning and construction sites will cease operation from Friday at 6 p.m. I have been in constant contact with local representatives, and the building section of the Department of Education and Skills, to have our current construction project added to the Essential Works list in order for building work to continue while pupils and staff are working from home.

I will continue to be in contact with you weekly. I will be monitoring the school email and voicemail and I will respond as promptly as I can. Ursula will also be responding as usual on Mondays and Fridays.

I wish you the very best of the coming weeks. All that matters now is that we all remain safe so that we can all return to school in a few weeks time.

Best wishes,

Martin Hanly.