



1st October, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It's hard to believe we are into October already. The weeks are flying by!

The beginning of my letter this week contains a few reminders of information that have been shared before but need your careful attention again please.

School Start time and pupils congregating:

- **Group A:** The school day starts at **8.50am** for the following classes- Ms. Hallahan's 1st/2nd Class, Ms. Gilley's 1st Class, Mrs. Lane's 3rd Class, Ms. Quinlan's 3rd Class, Mrs. Kelly's 2nd Class and Ms. Walsh's 5th Class.
- **Pupils from Group A are not permitted to arrive at the school gate before 8.40am.**
- **Group B:** The school day starts at **9.05am** for the following classes - Ms. Lynch's Junior Infants, Ms. McCarthy's Junior/Senior Infants, Ms. Kelleher's Senior Infants, Ms. McElhinney's 4th Class, Ms. Greally's 4th Class, Mrs. Murphy's 5th/6th Class, Ms. Fitzgerald's 6th Class.
- **Pupils from Group B are not permitted to arrive prior to 8.55am.**

Parental cooperation is required in order for us to achieve our common goal to keep all in our school community as safe as possible. Children are arriving earlier and earlier despite repeated communications regarding school start times. Pupils are also congregating in various locations before school. This results in pupils mixing unnecessarily and defeats the purpose of the school's implementation of health and safety measures including pods and bubbles. We are entering our sixth week back at school and we will continue to implement the correct procedures. All parents are asked to support our efforts and strictly adhere to drop off times and procedures please.

Messages for staff: All teachers have supplied their school email address. Messages for teachers should be sent via email.

Collection of Children during the School Day: If it all possible appointments for the dentist/speech therapist etc should be made for after school. However, if an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements apply:

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should avoid contact with any class that may be in the yard.
- On arrival to the main front door they should either phone the office or use the intercom at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be called from their class by a staff member.
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

Forgotten items: There has been an increase in the number of parents calling to the school with forgotten items over the past few weeks. You are asked to ensure that your daughter(s) bring their lunch, drink, coat and washbag to school each morning to avoid an adult having to come to the school during the day.

Returning to school after an absence due to illness: As parents, we all want our children to be in school and catch up on lost time and possible lost learning due to the school closure. However, as per HSE advice, children should be symptom free for 48 hours prior to returning to school. You are asked to always err on the side of caution and if in doubt keep your daughter at home and contact your GP. You are reminded that the phonecall to the GP to seek advice is free of charge.



What should a parent do if a pupil is sent home as she is displaying symptoms which are consistent with Covid-19 but your GP does not recommend Covid testing? If the GP does not recommend Covid testing, the recommendation is for you to observe the child at home for 48 hours and if no further symptoms develop, your child can then, after 48 hours, return to school.

Attendance: This year our top priority is everyone's health. While it is accepted that there is a direct link between school attendance and pupil progress we must make exceptions this year. We thank you all for erring on the side of caution - keeping children home who are unwell, getting GP advice when they present with symptoms that may be consistent with Covid-19 and observing all the guidelines around isolation etc. It will mean attendance figures will be low. However, if we manage to keep the school open and keep each other well we are doing the right thing. The school is obliged, by law, to inform Túsla when a pupil is absent for a total of 20 school days in one school year. As we have to fill in the category of absence when informing Túsla it is essential that a reason for a pupil's absence is promptly submitted by you on Aladdin Connect. Please note if absences are Covid-19 related (as would be indicated by you on Aladdin Connect) this will be indicated to Túsla if a 20 day absence return is being made.

Parent/Teacher Meetings: Ordinarily, at this time of year, we would be scheduling Parent/Teacher meetings. The Department of Education are due to issue guidance to schools in relation to Parent/Teacher meetings and until such guidance is received we will hold off on scheduling meetings. In the interim, you are welcome to email your daughter's class teacher if you have any queries that need addressing.

Seesaw: Sincere thanks to all who have consented for the use of Seesaw as an online learning platform. We still await consent for 25 children. If you have not yet viewed the permissions page on Aladdin Connect you are asked to do so as soon as possible as classes are eager to get going and use Seesaw as a learning platform. Once all parents have accessed the permissions page on Aladdin Connect we will then be in a position to forward you your child's unique Home Learning Code.

Mobile Phone Policy: In light of the ongoing pandemic as a result of Covid-19, current restrictions are in place that promote a safe and secure environment. These restrictions have implications for possession and use of mobile phones for members of the school community. Therefore, our mobile phone policy has been reviewed. The reviewed policy was ratified by the Board of Management on Tuesday, 29th September. The reviewed policy is attached here and is also available to view on the school's website. You will note that the policy states that 'It is the Board of Management's policy to prohibit the use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off site activities'.

Guidelines for Children and Parents:

- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact.
- The Board prohibits, without exception, pupils from bringing mobile phones to school.
- Any child found to intentionally have in their possession and/or use a phone in school will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent makes contact with the school office, and arranges for the collection of the mobile phone, adhering to social distancing restrictions if appropriate. Similarly, the use of electronic games, personal stereos etc. is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal).
- The school will not be liable for the replacement of lost, stolen or damaged devices.
- The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code.

The terms of the policy will be enacted from Monday, 5th October.



Well done: A big well done to all our Junior Infants. It's hard to believe that they have only been in school a month. They have had a wonderful start and have made great strides. This week saw them walking independently into school from the school gate. It is wonderful to see our youngest girls being so independent. Keep it up girls- we are very proud of you.

Exciting News: It's a very exciting time for the senior readers in our school as they prepare to meet a real-life author in a brand new way! On Tuesday, October 13th, all pupils from 4th – 6th Class will meet with popular Irish novelist and children's author Judi Curtin via Zoom. Permission will be sought from parents for the use of Zoom as a learning tool in advance of Judi Curtin's visit.

In the afternoon of the 13th October, Judi will be displayed on the interactive whiteboard in each classroom and will discuss some of her most popular books, which include, 'Time After Time', 'Eva's Holiday' and 'Alice Next Door'. The 4th – 6th Class pupils will also have a chance to ask Judi some questions. The girls and their teachers are very excited for this wonderful opportunity. 'Today a reader, tomorrow a leader'.

Wishing you all a safe and happy week.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Fiona O'Callaghan

Principal