



Sacred Heart of Jesus National School

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26th August 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Board of Management and staff of Sacred Heart of Jesus National School acknowledge and accept their responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of the school community – pupils, parents/guardians, staff and others. While it may not be possible to eliminate the risk of COVID-19 infection, with the co-operation of all parents/guardians it is possible to minimise the risk of COVID-19 being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.

As the Summer holidays near an end and we begin the countdown to a return to school, I would like to thank you for your extraordinary cooperation, support and encouragement over the past 6 months. Moving forward together, the flexibility and goodwill of all parents/guardians will be crucial to ensuring that health and safety measures and protocols can be implemented effectively. It is, therefore, vitally important that parents/guardians are aware of and abide by the measures and protocols outlined in this document.

We are all in this together. We have a common cause, and depend on each other to put our best foot forward. Let's remain strong and united for the sake of our children, ourselves and each other. Ní neart go cur le chéile!

Yours sincerely,

Kieran Lyons

Principal

Return to School: Important Information for Parents and Guardians

Return to school date

We will have a staggered return to school to allow for a safe return for pupils and staff, and to help the children settle in on their first day back in school. Staff members will be on hand in the school yards on the mornings of Monday August 31st and Tuesday September 1st to help out with any difficulties locating classrooms etc.

The staggered start will operate as follows:

| Return to School | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Class | Day/Date |
| Coiscéim classes | Monday – August 31 st |
| Junior Infants | Monday – August 31 st |
| Senior Infants | Monday – August 31 st |
| First | Monday – August 31 st |
| Second | Monday – August 31 st |
| Third | Tuesday – September 1 st |
| Fourth | Tuesday – September 1 st |
| Fifth | Tuesday – September 1 st |
| Sixth | Tuesday – September 1 st |

Travel abroad

Children who have returned home after travelling abroad anywhere outside the most up to date version of the Government’s list of “green zone” countries must self-isolate on their return for a period of 14 days. Details of green zone countries can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8868e-view-the-covid-19-travel-advice-list/>

School attendance

If a child is in one of the following categories, he/she should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- Children who have a suspected case of COVID-19 and the outcome of the test is pending;
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of COVID-19 and the outcome of the test is pending;
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school;
- Children who are generally unwell.

When to keep your child at home and phone your GP

The following advice is available on <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

A child should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 –

- high temperature i.e. a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- a new cough
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss or changed sense of smell
- loss of taste or distortion of taste.

You will need to:

1. Isolate your child - this means keeping them at home and completely avoiding contact with other people, as much as possible. Read advice on self-isolation
2. Phone your GP - they will advise you if your child needs a coronavirus test.
3. Everyone that your child lives with should also restrict their movements, at least until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.

Treat your child at home for their symptoms. Your child should only leave your home to have a test or to see your GP. Follow the medical advice on what to do if your child:

- is given another diagnosis by your GP;
- is not tested and is also not given another diagnosis from your GP;
- tests positive for coronavirus; or
- tests negative for coronavirus

Supporting the learning of children who cannot attend school

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time for personal reasons and/or family reasons due to COVID-19, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to provide the school with a letter or certificate from a doctor or consultant to confirm the need for the child's absence from school.

When is it okay to send my child to school?

The following advice is available on <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

It is usually okay to send your child to school or childcare if they:

- only have nasal symptoms, such as a runny nose or a sneeze;
- do not have a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more (as long as their temperature has not been lowered by taking any form of paracetamol or ibuprofen);
- do not have a cough;
- have not been in close contact with anyone who has coronavirus;
- do not live with anyone who is unwell and may have coronavirus;
- have been told by a GP that their illness is caused by something else, that is not coronavirus. Your GP will tell you when they can return to school or childcare.
- have got a negative ('not detected') coronavirus test result and have not had symptoms for 48 hours

You do not need to restrict your child's movements if the only symptoms they have are a **runny nose and sneezing**. They can continue to go to school or childcare if these are the only symptoms they have. **If your child also has a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or over) or has any other common symptoms of coronavirus - isolate your child, phone your GP and restrict your movements.**

Most of the time, you do not need to phone your GP if a runny nose or sneezing are your child's only symptoms. Talk to your pharmacist instead.

A runny nose or sneezing on their own are more likely to be symptoms of a cold or other viral infection.

School grounds

Parents/Guardians and others visitors are requested to wear a face covering while on the school grounds.

Parents/Guardians are requested to stand at 2 metres away from the external doors of the classrooms when collecting children at home time, and to maintain at least 2 metres physical distance form other parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians are requested to leave the school grounds promptly after bringing a child to school or collecting a child from school.

If a parent/guardian wishes to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- Upon arrival at the school, the parent/guardian should either phone the school office or use the intercom at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be brought from their class to the parent/guardian by a member of staff.
- The parent/guardian who is collecting the child will be asked to 'sign the child out'.

School access

No adult, other than a staff member, should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

Face to face meetings with school staff will be by appointment only. There will be a system in place for all visitors who need to come to the school to make appointment, arrange to contact a central point and to record their visit using the Contact Tracing Log.

Messages for teachers from parents/guardians can be sent via Aladdin Connect.

Messages for school management or school secretary can be sent by email to sacredheartns@gmail.com or by phoning the school office at (01) 8216400.

Visitors

There will be a system in place for all visitors who need to come to the school to make appointment, arrange to contact a central point and to record their visit using the Contact Tracing Log.

School uniform

Pupils in our Infant classes wear their school PE uniform. Pupils in our Coiscéim classes and in First to Sixth can alternate between wearing the formal school uniform and the school PE uniform each day.

Healthy lunch

All children will need a healthy lunch, **which may include one small treat on Fridays only**, e.g. two biscuits, a fun-size bar. Re-usable lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be used. The children will bring lunch waste and any uneaten lunch home, which should help parents/guardians monitor their eating habits.

The children will Reduce, Reuse and Recycle waste. All classrooms will be equipped with a much smaller pedal-operated bin (with a bin liner) to facilitate the regular collection of used waste disposal bags from classrooms and other areas within the school facility.

Hygiene bag

Pupils should have a personal hygiene bag with them in school each day with tissues, a small face cloth for drying their hands and a small bottle of hand sanitiser (preferably non-alcohol based sanitiser) for personal use only. The face cloth should be changed on a daily basis for hygiene purposes.

Personal items

In so far as possible, all pupils should bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case or 'ziplock' bag (labelled with their name) to avoid the sharing of equipment. All items should have the child's name (or a mark) on them for ease of identification. **These items will remain in school.**

Copies and books

Each pupil should bring to school just 1 writing copy, 1 mathematics copy and their school books (as per the class Book List issued in June) covered with plastic (wipeable) covers. **These items will remain in school.**

Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19

If a child displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following are the procedures that will be implemented:

- The child will be accompanied to a 'Safe Room', **supervised, supported, comforted and put at ease** by at least 2 members of staff.
- The child's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted immediately.
- The child will be encouraged to wear a mask, if possible, in a common area with other people or while exiting the school building.
- The child will be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the child is well enough to go home, they will be transported home by a family member as soon as possible
- If the child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, 999 or 112 will be contacted and informed that the sick child is a COVID-19 suspect.
- An assessment of the incident will be undertaken which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Arrangements will be put in place for appropriate cleaning of the Safe Room, classroom and other areas.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed, and staff confidentiality is essential at all times.

Impact of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in a class

If the school is notified that a person in a child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the parents/guardians of all children in the class will be notified and public health advice will be sought and followed.

Arrival at school

The school gates will open as normal at 8.30 a.m. each morning. All children will go straight into their classrooms when they arrive at school (as they do on wet mornings). Pupils will be supervised in their classrooms by teachers and SNAs. Class will begin at the normal time of 8.40 a.m. (Coiscéim classes) and 8.50 a.m. (Junior Infants to Sixth).

Physical distancing for children

The principle of physical distancing will apply in a practical way recognising the nature of a learning environment. For children with special educational needs maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or reasonable to implement. Classrooms are

reconfigured to comply with physical distancing as per Department of Education and Skills’ (DES) guidelines i.e. 1 metre distance between pupils in classes from Third to Sixth.

Class bubbles

Pupils and their teachers in Third to Sixth will be structured into “Class Bubbles” (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or “Pods” within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical. There will be an increase in distance between the children in Infants to Second class as well as a reduction in the number of pupils who sit together in groups/pods. Pupils will play in their class bubbles in the yard. The 3 Coiscéim classes will play together as a class bubble in the playground.

Use of personal protection equipment (PPE)

“It is not recommended that children attending primary school or preschool/childcare settings wear face-coverings. It is recommended that teachers and staff in primary schools wear a face-covering when a physical distance of 2 meters from other staff or children cannot be maintained.” (COVID-19 Interim Guidance for the use of face-coverings in childcare and educational settings, HSE/HPSC 06.08.2020). However, children may wear an appropriate face covering in school if they wish to do so and are able to wear it correctly.

Curriculum

Upon return to school there will be a particular focus on Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), mental health and wellbeing and Physical Education.

Homework

There will not be any written homework for the month of September.

Breaktimes

Staggered breaktimes will operate as follows:

| Breaktimes | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Classes | Small Break | Big Break |
| Coiscéim classes | 10.45 a.m. to 11.00 a.m | 12.35 p.m. to 1 p.m. |
| Junior Infants | 10.45 a.m. to 11.00 a.m | 12.35 p.m. to 1 p.m. |
| Senior Infants | 10.25 a.m. to 10.40 a.m | 12.05 p.m. to 12.30 p.m. |
| First | 10.45 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. | 12.35 p.m. to 1 p.m. |
| Second | 10.25 a.m. to 10.40 a.m. | 12.05 p.m. to 12.30 p.m. |
| Third | 10.45 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. | 12.35 p.m. to 1 p.m. |
| Fourth | 10.45 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. | 12.35 p.m. to 1 p.m. |
| Fifth | 10.25 a.m. to 10.40 a.m | 12.05 p.m. to 12.30 p.m. |
| Sixth | 10.25 a.m. to 10.40 a.m | 12.05 p.m. to 12.30 p.m. |

Dismissal times

Staggered dismissal times will operate as follows:

| Dismissal Times | |
|------------------------|--|
| Coiscéim classes | 1.20 p.m. (Junior Day) 2.20 p.m. (Senior Day) |
| Junior Infants | 1.20 p.m. |
| Senior Infants | 1.30 p.m. |
| First | 2.30 p.m. |
| Second | 2.30 p.m. |

| Dismissal Times continued | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Third | 2.30 p.m. |
| Fourth | 2.20 p.m. |
| Fifth | 2.20 p.m. |
| Sixth | 2.20 p.m. |

Exit routes

Pupils will exit the school grounds as follows (except if a child has to go to another part of the school grounds to collect a sibling at home time).

| Exit Routes | |
|--------------------|--|
| Classes | Routes |
| Coiscéim classes | Coiscéim door and main gate to Huntstown Way |
| Junior Infants | Huntstown Way or Huntstown Wood gates |
| Senior Infants | Huntstown Way or Huntstown Wood gates |
| First | Huntstown Way or Huntstown Wood gates |
| Second | Huntstown Way or Huntstown Wood gates |
| Third | Gate beside Huntstown Community Centre |
| Fourth | Gate beside Huntstown Community Centre |
| Fifth | Gate beside Huntstown Community Centre |
| Sixth | Main gate to Huntstown Way |

Hand washing

All pupils will wash hands:

- on their arrival in the classroom;
- before eating;
- after going to the toilet;
- after coming in from the yard;
- before going home;
- at other times throughout the day as appropriate.

Hand hygiene will also be achieved through the regular use of non-alcohol based hand sanitiser that will be available in classrooms and in multiple locations throughout the school (when hands are clean).