



Scoil Naomh Fhionáin

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Dear Parents,

We hope that we find you well and that you are enjoying the final days of the Summer holidays. We are all very much looking forward to welcoming you back to St Finian's NS on September 1st! We also wish to extend a warm welcome to the Junior Infants who are joining our school community for the first time.

This is a letter to outline to you how we plan to reopen our school, in line with current guidelines and recommendations. We are endeavouring to do this by outlining the new guidelines for our school, in order to allow the children to return in a safe, yet relaxed, manner, thus allowing a pleasurable and enjoyable experience for the children. We wish to reassure parents that we will be following said guidelines, as issued by the Department of Education, in order to ensure the safety and protection of children, parents, teachers and the wider school community. Since the release of the government guidelines 'Returning to School' issued by Minister of Education, principal Gearoid, staff and Board of Management members have put together safety procedures so all students and staff can return to school safely.

We are asking that you read through the following document carefully, as we all must work together in order to ensure that re-opening our school occurs in a safe manner. We wish to welcome everyone back in order to continue on their educational journey through St Finian's NS, with as little disruption as possible to the teaching and learning process. Our aim is to ensure that we put in place guidelines that will guard against the spread of the virus in our school and community.

We have put together some common F.A. Q's for parents and staff in order to avoid as much uncertainty as possible. However, understand that this is a live document and is subject to change at any time.

Note – You should not send your child to school if they have a temperature, a cough of any kind, loss of smell/taste or have any shortness of breath.

Who is the Lead Worker Representative in St Finian's NS?

- Gearóid Moran is the Lead Worker Representative (LWR). The protocol provides for the appointment of a LWR in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around Covid-19 in the workplace.
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When is my child returning to school?

- All students will return on September 1st 2020

Where will my child be attending school?

- St. Finian's NS is awaiting confirmation from the Department of Education on the request for 2 additional teachers. The school will follow up with further information as soon as it's received.
- In order to enable St. Finian's NS to adhere to government guidelines, we may also have to use Waterville GAA buildings. We will inform parents as soon as we have clarification from the Department of Education on this matter.

Will there be staggered times for different classes?

- No. School grounds will open at 9.00am as per usual.
- Children should not be on the premises before this time.

What safety procedures are being implemented to ensure it's safe for my child?

- Each classroom will meet at a designated area/line in the school yard.
- Once the children arrive at the school, they should immediately proceed to their designated line in the school yard.
- The respective class teacher will invite the children to enter the school via their designated entrance point, where their temperature will be taken daily. Please do not send your child to school if they have a temperature, a cough of any kind, loss of smell/taste or have any shortness of breath.
- We would kindly ask parents to wait for a few minutes to ensure that their child passes the temperature check.
- On opening day, Junior Infants will be invited to enter the school at 9.30 on Tuesday, 1st of September. This is so they have the opportunity to enter the classroom for the first time in a relaxed and supported manner. They will begin their day at 9.30 for the first week of school. Junior Infants will finish their school day at 12.30 for the first two weeks and will be taken by their teacher to the exit area at 12.30 to be collected.
- Children will exit their classrooms at home-time on a staggered basis. Each class will be accompanied by their teacher and will exit the building at staggered intervals, ensuring that social distancing is observed.
- Parents should observe social distancing at all times and remain outside the school grounds.
- No adults other than staff members should enter the school grounds. Messages for teachers can be sent by email or by phoning the school office.

Will children or teachers have to wear masks?

- It is recommended that primary school teachers and staff wear face coverings where a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- Primary school children will not be required to wear face coverings under any circumstance.
- In the classroom, a Perspex screen will be placed in front of the teacher desk.

Cleaning of the School

- The school has an extensive cleaning programme in place as per the guidelines from the Department. The school will be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day through the school season.
- Prior to school commencing on September 1st, a cleaning company has been hired to thoroughly clean down the school.

How will social distancing work at St Finian's NS?

- Up to Second Class there are no social distancing requirements, however each classroom is to be treated as a stand-alone entity called a Bubble. Classes will be further grouped internally in small groupings called pods.
- Children will not be permitted to enter any other classroom except their own for the foreseeable future unless attending SET.
- Children will also not be permitted to go to the school office.
- Each class grouping or Bubble will go to their specific area in the yard at break times and will not interact with another Bubble.

What about hand sanitisers?

Hand sanitisers will be installed in the following areas:

- Outside each classroom
- Toilets
- Entrance and exit

Frequency of hand hygiene – Pupils and staff will perform hand hygiene -

- On arrival at school
- Before eating
- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When their hands are physically dirty
- Anyone moving between rooms should sanitise hands before leaving each room and entering the next room

What about the bathrooms?

In the bathrooms there are dispensers with soap and the children will thoroughly wash and then dry their hands using disposable paper towels. All bathrooms will have hot water. There will also be pedal bins whereby the paper towels can be dispensed in a safe manner.

What if my child forgets a book, lunch etc?

If your child forgets his/her lunch etc. there will be a designated drop off area outside the front door. This drop off point should be for emergencies only. Visits to the school should be kept to a minimum to ensure the safety of all school community members.

What if I need to collect my child during the school day?

If you need to collect your child during the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- When you arrive, you should phone to alert the office that you have arrived
- The child will be brought out to you from their class by a member of staff

What sorts of in-class procedures will children have upon their return?

All teachers will be implementing in-class procedures as recommended by the Department of Education guidelines.

- Each child will be given a designated seat.
- Children will not be permitted to share items such as books, pens, pencils, erasers etc. so it is important that your child comes to school each day prepared with everything they need.
- It is necessary that they have a separate pencil case that will be kept at school at all times.
- Any school books that may be designated as for Homework should be kept at home.

What about school uniforms?

- School Uniform - Tuesday and Thursday
- Tracksuit on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- These arrangements are to enable children to come to school daily in fresh clean uniforms.
- If your child is unable to tie their laces, we would recommend that they wear shoes with Velcro fastenings until they are able to tie their own laces.

Children/Parents/House Hold member Visiting non 'green list countries' ?

- All current government guidelines must be adhered to regarding any foreign travel.
- For example, if a child leaves the country to a non 'green list country', he/she will have to self-isolate for 14 days and cannot return to school until the isolation is completed.
- Please inform the school if you have been or will be abroad 14 days prior to the school reopening, or at any time during the school year.

What happens if my child becomes ill?

- If your child becomes ill or displays a temperature over 38 degrees, they will be given a face mask and taken to an isolation area.

- Parents will be contacted immediately to collect their child.
- Please make sure your contact details are all up to date with the school office.

NOTE: Please do not send your child to school if they have a temperature, a cough of any kind, loss of smell/taste or have any shortness of breath.

Will my child have Homework when they cannot bring books home?

- School homework policy will be reviewed when we return to school in September.
- Certain books may be designated for use for homework only and remain at home.
- Further details will follow on this.

How do I make School Payments Safely?

- All payments to school must be made using the DataBiz online portal or by bank transfer.
- Staff will not be able to accept any cash payments.
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What does my child need to bring to school daily - Lunch Boxes/Rain-gear/Items from home?

- As children will not be bringing books from school to home, we would ask that they would be able to keep their lunchboxes in their schoolbags.
- Children should bring raingear to school each day, in order to allow them to participate in regular outdoor breaks.
- We would ask that children would not bring any unnecessary items, such as toys, footballs etc. to school.

Cooperation

The school has a responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all members of our school community- pupils, parents and staff. A robust school plan has been put in place to achieve this, but it cannot work without the cooperation and endeavours of the whole school community. We need your help to follow our new school rules as laid out above and to follow the HSE health guidelines to ensure our school opens, remains open and remains COVID free.

It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the cooperation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to the school and the consequent risk of its spread. As well as your cooperation, which is essential, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.