

Scoil Inse Rátha
Déan do Dhícheall
Newsletter September 2020

Dear Parents,

Now that the dust has settled a bit and we are all back in school it is time to reflect on the last few months and to look ahead to the future. Firstly, thank you for all your support and help since March 12th. We were all thrust into unfamiliar roles and had to make massive adjustments. Being back in school is a real positive and it was a real boost to see all of our students again. Over the next few weeks and months our staff will do what they do best. They will figure out where your child is at and will guide them through so that they can achieve their potential. The normality, routine and consistency of the school day will be like a comfort blanket even though it will be tiring, initially. If we all continue to do what we have done for the first few days we should be able to stay open.

Covid-19 in our School:

We have taken lots of preventative measures and will continue to do that. Children sanitise their hands as they enter the school each morning. They wash their hands before they eat and again after they come in from yard. They will wash or sanitise their hands after being out of the class for an activity and they wash their hands after using the bathroom. Staff will monitor and arrange for extra washing or sanitising at other times during the day as necessary.

If a child is displaying symptoms they will be removed from the classroom to Room 2 and parents will be contacted to come and collect their child. They will be advised to consult with their GP to decide what to do next. This consultation is free so there is no barrier to anyone making that call. We are not medical professionals so we will make the best decision we can in the interests of keeping everyone safe and our school open. Any decisions after we contact parents to collect their child are for public health professionals. We will communicate what we are told to communicate to parents. Medical information is private information to that individual so please don't ask us to discuss another child or family.

When dropping off or collecting your child please wear a mask if you can't maintain 2m social distancing.

Our Covid-19 Response Plan and Logistics Plan are on our website, under Information for Parents, if you want more information. If you have any concerns, please contact me.

Summer Works:

Summer holidays provide an opportunity to do jobs around the school when the children are out of the building. This year was particularly busy as The Department of Education waited until the end of July to publish their roadmap to reopening schools. We also had to organise for the recruitment of new teachers which in itself is a five-week process. Painting, cleaning, gardening and lots of paperwork and planning accounted for this summer. It all came together thanks to a whole community effort. Parents Association, local community, Board of Management, local suppliers and staff all played their part in making this possible. I received several offers of help from local people which was lovely too. We are really lucky to be part of such a special community and I will never be able to express my gratitude adequately enough – Thank you!

Little Island Industries Development Company (LIIDC):

This group of local industries sponsor us nearly every year, supporting various projects. This year they have provided funding for Chromebooks and a charging cabinet. Once we have settled into a routine we will introduce these Chromebooks into each class to complement the iPads that we have already. We are very grateful for the continued support of the LIIDC.

Communicating with teachers:

It is unfortunate that we can't facilitate informal communication at the gate or on yard in the morning due to Covid-19. However, there are other ways to keep in contact with your child's teacher. You can send a note in with your child via their homework journal/folder. You can ring Jacinta to pass on a message or to request that the teacher call you back or to arrange a face to face meeting. We will limit face to face meetings to 15 minutes and will ask that you wear a face

covering. Each teacher will be preparing for remote learning so there may be an option to contact them via email. Your child's teacher will confirm this over the next week or so when they have collected all the email addresses for their class.

Extra-Curricular Activities:

Our focus from now until the midterm break is on getting all of our children back into the routine of school, concentrating on teaching and learning and making sure that we are all safe and happy in school. There will be no extra-curricular or after school activities until November at the earliest. We will not have any visiting coaches either as part of our efforts to minimise contact and increase distance to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Supervision:

From Monday 14th September, Ms. Diamond and myself will not be at the front gate but will be supervising on the corridor in the building. Children are to proceed to the back of the school and in their allocated door as they have been doing. Adults are still not allowed on the school campus without an appointment. Children are not allowed in until 8.40am when supervision begins and teaching will start at 9.05am so there is still time for a gradual entering of the school grounds. We will review this at the end of September and communicate any changes to you.

Pupil accident insurance:

This, 24 hr cover, is compulsory for every child in the school. Accidents happen both at home and in school and this insurance has proven to be priceless for families over the years. Check out www.allianz.ie for more details.

App:

Details on how to use our school app are in your child's homework journal. We will be using this for all communication, updates and news this year. If you can't access our app please contact Jacinta so you don't miss important notifications. Jacinta is in the office until 1.45pm each day. The office is unmanned after this time. Leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. If it is a short message like a change of person collecting your child, you can text or WhatsApp 0830192827 if you don't get through to Jacinta.

Uniforms:

Please make sure your child wears the correct tracksuit/uniform on the appropriate days. Teachers will inform each class of their tracksuit days shortly. Please label all your child's belongings clearly – even for those in the older classes!

Parking:

Please note that the car park is for staff use only and we would appreciate if the entrance could be kept clear at all times. Please be considerate of our neighbours when parking outside the school and don't block their entrances or park on the yellow lines. Please keep the bus parking space free for the bus. It is very big and will block the whole road if it can't pull in. Please also keep the disabled bays free for those who need them.

Best of luck to everyone for the year ahead. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

All the best,

Micheál Rea