



Dear Parents/Carers

### **Restart Plan for September 2020: Primary Six**

Our Restart Plan provides information about our arrangements for reopening the school to pupils in September 2020. It is important to note however, that the Public Health advice at the time of reopening will prevail over any of the planning assumptions we have made in our Restart Plan. The Covid-19 virus continues to have profound implications for society and we may need to adjust our plans to address any issues that may arise as the children return to school.

This plan sets out some general points about the arrangements for restarting school. There is also some information which relates specifically to the return of children in Primary Six and this is included under the heading 'Arrangements for Primary Six Pupils'.

### **Supporting Children to Return to School**

We want to ensure that the children are excited and relaxed about coming back to school. After such a prolonged period of school closure, it is possible that some children may feel increased levels of anxiety arising from having to leave their family/home and return to school. It is important we work together to alleviate any such issues. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or Mrs Downard (Vice-Principal) or Mrs Murray (SENCO) to discuss any concerns you may have. The return to school will involve some new routines and we will ensure these are all explained to the children on their return.

If you have a child who is clinically, extremely vulnerable please contact Mrs Downard in the week beginning Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August to discuss his/her individual needs.

### **Hand Hygiene**

Children should be reminded of the significance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus. To prepare children for restarting school, you should ensure that they know how to wash their hands properly for at least twenty seconds with soap and water. This will be particularly important for younger children. When the children return to school we will be asking them to wash their hands regularly throughout the school day.

Due to allergies and possible skin reactions, staff will not administer hand sanitisers to pupils. However, if parents of older pupils feel that their child should use hand sanitiser,

then children can bring some to school for their own individual use. This should be labelled with their name and should not be shared with other pupils.

### **'Catch It, Bin It, Kill It'**

Please explain the importance of good respiratory hygiene to your children and encourage them to follow the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach. Children should be discouraged from touching their eyes, face, nose and mouth. Please show them how to cough or sneeze into their elbow if they do not have a tissue. When using a tissue, they should be shown how to cough or sneeze into it and then dispose of it safely into the nearest bin. Your help in building a level of routine in relation to respiratory hygiene would be much appreciated.

### **Social Distancing for Pupils**

It is acknowledged that young children cannot reasonably be expected to remain apart from each other throughout the day and that children flourish mentally, physically and emotionally through interactive play. However, to mitigate the risk of virus spread, each class will be organised as a 'protective bubble'.

Maintaining protective bubbles is a means of decreasing interactions between children and adults from different classes until a further easing of measures is possible based on Public Health advice. The use of protective bubbles will cover all aspects of the school day and consequently, different arrangements will be in place for break and lunch times.

### **Social Distancing for Parents**

It is important that appropriate social distancing is observed among parents/carers when children are entering/exiting the school grounds. We have not staggered the start/finish times for each Year Group in order to minimise disruption for families who have children in different Year Groups. However, we will monitor the situation and, if the planned arrangements are causing congestion and resulting in too many interactions around the entry/exit points, we will consider introducing staggered times for each Year Group's arrival/departure from the site.

We must all accept our collective responsibility to prevent virus spread. Whilst we understand the importance of connecting socially with other members of the school community, we strongly advise parents/carers not to congregate around the site. It is important to be aware that should a cluster of cases of the virus be identified in our school community, then St Joseph's could be instructed to close for a period of time in accordance with the Public Health requirements for preventing transmission of the virus. It is essential that each of us does everything we can to prevent such an eventuality arising.

In order to keep the number of adults coming on to the school site to a minimum, it is recommended that only one parent/carer should escort the children from their household to school. Where children are capable of making their own way independently to and from their classroom/ supervised muster point, they should be encouraged to do so and parents should only escort them as far as the school gates.

We appreciate that on the first day of school for Nursery and Primary One pupils more than one adult may wish to accompany the child. However, after the initial induction meeting

has taken place, we would ask parents to adhere to the recommendation for only one adult to accompany children to and from school.

### **Traffic Management**

The school has a Traffic Management Plan the aim of which is to keep the site a safe place for all users. Parents/carers are asked to note that, in the current circumstances, there may be an increase in the number of pupils walking/cycling to and from school. Therefore, you should exercise extreme care and attention when driving into and exiting from the Parish Hall and Church car parks. Signs notifying users of 5mph speed limits are clearly displayed. All drivers are asked to adhere to that limit and to show courtesy and consideration to other car park users. Parking indiscriminately, such as mounting pavements, double parking, stopping on yellow lines, obstructing access points and parking near junctions causes danger to pupils and other road users.

Please note, spaces in the Parish Hall car park may fill up quickly at drop off/pick up times so we would encourage as many parents/carers as possible to use the Church car park. This will also help with social distancing.

### **Wearing of PPE**

Under current DE guidance, the general wearing of face coverings in school is not recommended for children or adults. School staff may, on occasions, wear items of PPE which might include wearing visors and/or gloves and/or an apron and/or a mask if they are giving first aid to a child, assisting a child with toileting or if the staff member's own personal circumstances requires additional protective measures to be taken in certain situations.

### **Children Showing Symptoms of COVID-19**

If your child has any symptoms of having the Covid-19 virus he/she should stay at home and your household should isolate in accordance with the latest Public Health advice. Symptoms include: raised temperature, persistent cough, loss of taste and loss of smell.

It might be helpful to take your children's temperatures to ensure they are normal before children are brought to school each day. There is a set procedure which schools must follow if a child presents as being unwell while in school. He/she will be brought to an isolation room and his/her parent/carer will be required to collect the child from school.

If there is a confirmed case of someone in the school having the Covid-19 virus the school will adhere to the Department of Health's 'Test, Trace and Protect' strategy. This requires the early identification of such cases, rapid testing, tracing of close contacts and isolation to break transmission chains. In order to ensure we have accurate records of everyone who has been in contact with anyone who tests positive, it will be necessary for us to record the name and contact details of everyone who enters the school buildings even if it is only for a short time. This will include any parent visiting the school for an appointment with a member of staff.

### **School Uniform**

As previously communicated in the Update at the end of June, we are aware that more regular cleaning of uniforms may pose some logistical problems for parents.

Therefore, from the start of the new school year, children may wear their PE uniform each day i.e. jogging trousers, polo shirt and sweat shirt. If we have warm weather, the children may wear summer dresses, grey school shorts and a St Joseph's polo shirt. It is acceptable for children to wear their normal school uniform at any stage and please note that there will be no requirement to wear a tie. Parents will have the flexibility to dress their children in whatever uniform items are available to them on any particular day.

It is our intention to return to wearing full school uniform whenever the current measures to prevent the spread of Coronavirus have eased.

### **School Bags and Other Items**

Initially, children **should not** bring schoolbags, pencil cases, toys or other items to school. Teachers will provide children with pencils, other stationery and any other items they may need while they are at school.

Home learning has always been an important part of our provision in St Joseph's and it is clear that the need for some learning activities to be completed or reinforced at home will remain. We will explain the arrangements for home learning when school reopens and we will also give consideration to how books/worksheets etc. can be transferred between home and school. This may include the children in P4-P7 using much smaller school bags similar to the book bags which are currently used from P1-P3. Your child's teacher will provide more information on this in due course.

### **Breaks and Lunches**

All children should continue to bring a healthy break to school and, where they are not availing of a school meal, they should also bring a packed lunch. Children may bring a reusable water bottle and it would be helpful if these items were labelled with their name.

School Meals will resume on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 with some necessary adjustments to the service. The September menu can be viewed in the Parents section of the school website and App. For the foreseeable future, the children will consume their school meals/packed lunches in their own classrooms.

On occasions, parents/carers drop in items for children's breaks and lunches after the school day has started. Due to current restrictions on entering the school building this practice should cease and we would respectfully request that you have everything organised fully before dropping your child off at school. If some exceptional and unforeseen circumstance arises which prevents your child from arriving at school with everything he/she requires for the day ahead, you should contact the school office to discuss how the matter may be resolved.

### **Payments and Cash Handling**

It has not yet been possible to implement cashless payment procedures for school meals or other school activities. Therefore, we would ask that payments to the Education Authority or the school should, where possible, be made by cheque. If you are sending cash to school, we would ask you to place it in an envelope or wrapping which is labelled clearly showing what the payment is for. Please try to ensure that the correct amount of money is provided in order to reduce the requirement to give change. This will improve efficiency and may also help to reduce potential spread of the virus.

### **Music Tuition**

We are unable to confirm when instrumental music tuition will resume in school so, for the foreseeable future, tuition will continue to be via the online platforms the tutors have set up. Whenever tuition is able to resume in school, we will communicate further to provide more information about the arrangements for the lessons.

### **Morning Club, 1 2 3 After School Club and After School Activities**

Unfortunately, we will be unable to return to a 'business as usual' basis from Day One. This means that, initially, we will be unable to provide our Morning Club, 1 2 3 After School Club and After School Activities. However, should additional or amended guidance be provided by DE, or if we can establish procedures which will enable these activities to operate whilst complying with existing guidance, we will make these facilities available to families as soon as practicably possible.

### **Arrangements for Primary Six Pupils**

**Start Date:** 01/09/20

**Morning Drop off:** 8:45-9:00am. P6 parents should escort their children to the school gates from where the pupils should make their own way to the upper playground where they will be supervised by staff until 9:00am. Staff will escort the children into the classrooms at 9:00am.

**Afternoon Pick Up:** Pupils will be released at 2:50pm. P6 Classes will leave the building through the P6/P7 entrance. Parents will be asked to wait for the Primary Six pupils on the footpath directly below the P1 entrance where there is sufficient space for them to socially distance. The pupils will be able to see their parents/carers and will be able to walk over to them under staff supervision. Those pupils who are to make their own way home or who are meeting their parents at the car park will be released from their teacher's care at the front of the school.

This plan and the precautions set out in it have been put in place to help stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus and to ensure that we all take responsibility for this. These arrangements will be kept under review and any changes will be communicated to you as appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Donnelly



Upper Playground. P6 pupils should make their way to this area between 8:45-9:00am where they will be supervised by staff who will then escort them into their classrooms

Parents of P6 pupils should wait in this area for the children at the end of the school day at 2:50pm. Staff will lead the pupils out through the P6/P7 exit and across to where their parents are waiting. Pupils who are making their own way home or to the car parks will be released from their teacher's care at this pick up point.

P6/P7 entrance/exit door