

25th August 2020

Dear Parents,

We look forward to welcoming you all back to school over the coming week. School life has changed considerably for us all over the past few months. We want to make every effort to ensure that our school will be a happy and secure place for your child while also implementing the safety measures stipulated by the Department of Education and Skills. We have put a number of safeguards in place. We ask that you read through these with your child to make him/her aware of the changes before they return to school. These arrangements are based on the advice provided by the government at www.gov.ie/backtoschool.

General

- Children will return to school over several days. This will help to ensure that children are informed of the new procedures in place for entry to and exit of their classrooms, movement throughout the school, lining up on the school yard etc. Children will return to school as detailed below:

Day	Class
Thursday, 27 th August @ 9.20am	4 th , 5 th and 6 th class children only
Friday, 28 th August @ 9.20am	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd class children only
Monday, 31 st August @ 9.20am	Junior and Senior Infants and the Haven classes only
Tuesday, 1 st September – <i>Staggered opening times detailed on page 2</i>	All classes

- Junior Infant children have been invited to meet with their class teacher and view their classroom on Thursday, 27th and Friday, 28th August. Each child has been given a 15-minute time slot. Parents received this information by email and text message last Friday.
- There will be eight mainstream classes and two special classes. Each class will be referred to as a 'bubble' and within each bubble there will be individual 'pods'. Most pods contain 4 children. In some rooms, due to class size and the space available, the pods may contain 5 or 6 children.
- Pods will be colour coded. Children will be given a coloured wrist band, at the beginning of each day, to correspond with their pod colour. This will help teachers and SNAs identify children of the same pod, for lining up on the school yard and, for entry to and exit of the school building. The wristband will be disposed of before they return home each afternoon.
- There will be two breaks. A 10-minute mid-morning break and a 30-minute lunch break. Break times will be staggered. This will help to ensure that only half of the school population will be on the yard at any one time. Your child will be informed of their break time once they commence.
- There will be no written homework for the first few weeks. Children may be asked to undertake project work online.

- Teachers and SNAs will be wearing visors or masks. Children are not required to wear masks as per Department of Education and Skills guidelines.

School start and finish time

We have staggered our starting and finishing times in order to eliminate gatherings of people. This is outlined below:

Time	Class
9.10am – 2.50pm	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd classes
9.20am – 3.00pm	4 th , 5 th and 6 th classes
9.30am – 2.10pm	Junior and Senior Infants

Children are asked to go directly to their classrooms once they have been dropped off. We request that you do not drop children to the school any earlier than 5 minutes before their start time. The school shelter has been closed off and there will be no place for children to gather. Please drop your child off and leave the area as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delays. We have made arrangements for children travelling on the school bus. Staff will assist them upon arrival.

Carpark

In order to minimise the possibility of traffic congestion we ask that parents use the following car parks from where children will access the school. This will reduce the number of cars in the carpark at any given time. A teacher and/or SNA will be present at the front set down area to assist children in 4th, 5th and 6th classes crossing the road. Please do not use the set down area or side access road for drop off or collection. These areas will need to be left free.

Car Park	Class
Carpark at the back of the school beside the astro turf	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd class children
Carpark at the front of the school – opposite the set down area	4 th , 5 th and 6 th class children
Carpark at the back of the school beside the astro turf	Junior and Senior Infants

Entering and Exiting the School Building

Classes will enter through allocated doors closest to their classroom. Teachers will explain and demonstrate this to children on their first day back at school. The yard has been marked to ensure social distancing. A considerable amount of time will be spent with children on their induction days

outlining where to line up etc. We request that parents do not enter the school. Should you need to drop anything to the school please make contact with us on 094 9388435, 086 7769805 or at admin@knockns.ie and arrangements will be made for drop off and collection.

School Bags, Books and Stationery

- All books, copies and stationery should be labelled with your child's name.
- Books, copies and pencil cases should be brought to school on the first day. These will be left in school for the moment.
- School bags should be brought to school on the first day. These will also be left in school and will be used to store your child's coat, lunch box and drink bottle.

Lunches

- Lunches should be brought to school in a Ziploc bag or lunchbox. Ziploc bags and waste left over from your child's lunch will be disposed of, in school, before they go home.
- Children should bring a drink to school in a reusable container. The school will provide children with drinking water, if required. In that case teachers will give out disposable cups. These will be disposed of in school.
- Lunchboxes and drink bottles should be washed thoroughly each evening.

Uniforms and Coats

- In order to make things easier for parents, and to ensure best hygiene practices are observed, we have decided to relax the uniform rule to allow for regular washing of clothes.
- Children can alternate between the school uniform and school tracksuit. All clothing must be labelled with your child's name.
- Please ensure that your child brings a coat to school. This will be left in your child's school bag while they are in class and brought home each afternoon. Please ensure that all clothing is washed regularly.

Cleaning and Hygiene

- The entire school has been given a deep clean. It will also be disinfected before your child returns to school.
- All pods will be wiped down with virucidal cleaner each morning and afternoon. The school will be cleaned every evening.
- A contract cleaner has been employed to sanitise high traffic areas and touch zones each day.
- All classrooms will have a sanitising station. Children should wash their hands thoroughly before they come to school. They will be asked to sanitise their hands each time they enter and leave the classroom and/or school building.

- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly throughout the day. There will be posters on display reminding children of handwashing technique and coughing and sneezing etiquette.

Health

- Please contact the school if your child has any underlying medical conditions
- The school has a dedicated isolation room. If a child presents with Covid 19 symptoms, their temperature will be taken with a non-contact thermometer and, they will be brought to the isolation room and cared for by a member of staff. Parents will be contacted and asked to collect them as soon as possible. We request that you do not send your child to school if they are displaying any of the Covid 19 symptoms. For more information please access <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/40e9c-protecting-your-child-from-coronavirus/>

Communication

All visitors, including parents, must make a pre-arranged appointment to enter the school building and it must be for essential purposes. Appointments can be made by contacting the school secretary. All visitors must wear masks, sanitise their hand, and complete a visitor log upon entry to the building.

Staffing

Ms Boyle, Mrs Tansey, Ms Sarsfield and Ms Nally are currently on maternity leave. Ms Noonan, Ms Brady, Ms Finn and Mr Duffy will be covering their leave. Noel Mc Hugh has secured a position closer to his home in Roscommon town and will not be returning to work with us this year. We wish them all the very best.

We understand that returning to school this August will be an entirely different experience for children and we hope that the transition will be as seamless as possible. Our main priority is the health and wellbeing of our entire school community. We have always aimed to create a happy and safe learning environment for children and we hope that with everyone's co-operation we will be able to continue to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Máire Boyle and Shirley Horkan