

**Return to School Guide August 2020**

**(Based on DE Guidance ‘New School Day’ version 2, 13/08/2020)**

Thank you very much for your patience as I endeavour to work my way through the most recent advice received from Minister Weir, the Department of Education and the Education Authority. Please read this newsletter, along with the previous one.

At last it is time to welcome our children back to school – we have missed them all and look forward to seeing everyone again. We also welcome our new children and families into P1. Over the next few weeks, we will be following the plan laid out in the last Newsletter ie. P7 begin on Monday 24 August, followed by half classes on 31st August. Then on the 7th September everyone will return to school. Staggered starts, finishes, breaks and lunches will now be the new norm.

The priority for our school is to minimise as far as possible the risk of infection by COVID-19 for pupils and staff. All decisions have been informed by government guidance and best practice but it should be noted that guidance will likely change as transmission of the virus within the community changes. We will continue to update you as appropriate.

The Covid-19 virus is still present and continues to have huge implications for society. Consequently, this updated plan has been written in line with guidance from the Department of Education (Re-Opening Schools Guidance, New School Day 13/08/2020) to provide information for you as to how we intend to reopen the school in the new academic year. It is important to note that Public Health advice at the time of reopening will prevail over the planning advised in this document.

***IMPORTANT***



It is really important that children are reminded of the significance of hygiene in preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Therefore, we would ask you to keep emphasising the importance of a regular and thorough hand washing. Keep practising this please. When children do return to school they will be asked to wash their hands repeatedly throughout the school day.

At times hand sanitisers will be used as a support for hand hygiene. This will initially be provided. We are aware that some children are unable to use these, so provision will be made for these children to wash their hands. Children will only use these when directed by the teachers. We have made a change and decided that, on entering the school, children will wash their hands and not use sanitiser.

In advance of the school reopening you should also discuss, explain and promote good respiratory hygiene to encourage your children to follow the ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ approach. Children should be discouraged from touching their eyes, face, nose and mouth. They should be shown how to cough or sneeze into their elbow if they don’t have a tissue. If they have a tissue they should be shown how to cough or sneeze into it and then dispose of it safely into the nearest bin.

You can help to emphasise these issues and build up a level of routine actions on the part of your children before they return to school. We will be spending a little time in class, at the beginning of each day, reminding the children of these things.

Please note that 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.

Before children are brought to school each day we would ask you to take their temperatures to ensure they are normal. From September teachers will use non-contact thermometers to check the temperature of children on entry to their classroom, if the temperature is outside the normal range parents/carers will be contacted. This will also be used for any child who appears to be ‘off form’ during the day. If any child presents as being unwell while in school, they will be brought to an isolation area (shelter) and supervised while their parent/carer is contacted.

If there is a positive case of someone in the school having the Covid-19 virus, we as a school will adhere to and participate in the Department of Health’s ‘Test, Trace and Protect’ strategy. As this requires early identification and isolation of such cases, rapid testing, tracing of close contacts and early, effective and supported isolation to break transmission chains, it will be necessary for the school to have accurate records of everyone who has been in contact with anyone who tests positive. When the school reopens we will be recording the details of anyone entering the school building.

**Class “Bubbles”**

* Children, especially young children, flourish through interactive play, including group play. Therefore, to mitigate the risk of the virus spreading, each class will be organised as a ‘protective bubble’ where the membership of the class, including children and adults, will be consistent. Maintaining protective bubbles is a means of decreasing interactions between groups.
* Social distancing has been relaxed in schools. We will however encourage social distancing when in the corridors, coming into school and leaving school.
* Within each “bubble” children will have designated seating, which must be adhered to.
* Movement in the classroom will be more restricted than in the past.
* Desks will be as far apart as is physically possible in the room.
* Children will be sharing a desk and foundation stage will be working seated in small groups.

**Well Being**

* We feel that our phased start will help children get used to being in school again, although we recognise that this will be a challenge for working parents. We want to bring the children back in a gentle yet focused way. Our strategies for dealing with wellbeing after this long school closure will develop as we welcome children back and discover what their needs are.
* When the teacher phones you, please let them know if there have been any issues over the last months that may have affected your child.
* If your family has had a traumatic experience over the last 5 months either Covid related or otherwise, please let us know. It is better for us to know so we can provide support.
* We know, that as a family you may be facing significant hardship which is placing pressure and stress on your family. Please let us know if we can help you. We don’t want to see any child disadvantaged.

**Lessons and the Curriculum**

* Initially we will follow a curriculum biased towards literacy, numeracy and PDMU, so that staff can assess where your children are in relation to their learning and begin to close any gaps.
* Homework and reading will be gradually introduced.
* Weather permitting, we hope to plan lessons outside.

**Break/Lunch Times**

* Children will remain in their bubbles during all break and play times.
* Each bubble will have a designated area for play, times will be staggered to avoid mixing of bubbles and overcrowding.
* Toys and items from home must not be brought in to school. Please check coat and trouser pockets, as sometimes a wee toy may be hiding here.
* Free school meals will be provided from Tuesday 1 September. These will be delivered to the classroom and take the form of a packed lunch. Choice details will be issued to pupils prior to 1 September.
* Parents whose children are entitled to FSM must remember to apply to the Education Authority for these.
* Please make sure all lunch boxes and water bottles are clearly named and sanitised before coming to school.

**Uniform**

* Children should wear their school uniform. Please make sure items are clearly named.
* We would encourage you to change and wash uniforms daily.
* Sunscreen should be applied at home if the weather is warm.
* Long hair needs to be tied back to reduce the number of times children touch their face during the day. Please keep hair decoration to a minimum.

**Medication**

* At this time only life saving medication will be given in school.
* If your child requires medication you must complete the medication form and return it to Mrs Wilson ( swilson869@c2kni.net ) before your child starts back.
* On the first day back send in any required medication which you usually have in school in a named, clear plastic zipped bag. Just a reminder that it is your responsibility to make sure the right medication is in school and in date for your child.

**Belongings**

* Please restrict what your child brings to school: packed lunch and break in a sanitised container, coat only if necessary.
* School bags should not be brought into school.

**Contacting School**

* Parents/Carers should contact school by phone or email. We will of course get back to you as soon as we can.
* Mrs Wilson will be in school to help you with any administration issues.
* If your circumstances have changed, please complete the data form in the Parent Section of the website, under Useful Forms. Return any completed forms to Mrs Wilson (swilson869@c2kni.net)

**Parent/Carer Access to the School Building**

* Parents/Carers must not enter the school building, other than by pre-arranged appointment.
* Any pre-arranged appointments will preferably be carried out remotely.
* ‘Forgotten’ items **cannot be delivered** to school during the school day. If your child has forgotten something we will endeavour to help them out.

**Other Visitors**

* Temperature checks will be carried out on anyone entering the school building.
* Visitors to the premises will be discouraged and non-essential visits will be cancelled or postponed.
* Contractors are to attend by agreement only, after the school has assessed the work to be essential. All required controls must be in place to allow work to be carried out safely.
* Contractors will be asked to provide risk assessments prior to their visits which includes their own controls around infection spread prevention.
* Hand sanitiser will be available in the school entrance for any visitors who must enter school.

**Lateness**

* Remember if you miss your allocated time of arrival, you will have to wait until 9.20am to come into school. You will need to phone the office from the playground and Mrs Wilson will complete the hygiene routine before your child goes to class.

**Appointments**

* If you can, arrange appointments for after school. If this is not possible, you should phone Mrs Wilson in the office and she will get your child for you. On returnyou will need to phone the office from the playground and Mrs Wilson will complete the hygiene routine before your child goes to class.

**Hygiene/Safety Precautions in School**

**Indoor Spaces**

* Where possible, windows and doors will be kept open when the building is occupied in order to aid ventilation.
* Each bubble will have their own designated classroom and will only have access to the toilets.
* Each class will be allocated their own equipment/resources/toys to keep in each bubble and cleaned after use. The range and variety of equipment/resources/toys will be limited due to increased hygiene and COVID regulations.

**Outdoor Spaces**

* Opportunities for outdoor learning when appropriate will be scheduled in designated areas.
* At this moment the outdoor play equipment will be out of use.

**Hand-Washing**

* We ask that children and staff wash their hands for the recommended time before leaving home. Hand sanitiser for adults will be available on entry into school. Opportunities for frequent hand washing are scheduled into each daily routine.
* Paper towels will be available in toilets and classrooms, to ensure adequate drying of hands.
* Handwashing posters will be in all toilets and classrooms, to provide a visual reminder about effective handwashing.
* Hand sanitiser will be available in all school entrance points. Every adult entering school MUST sanitise their hands on entry into school.

**Tissues and Facial Hygiene**

* Disposable tissues are available in each room for both staff and pupils to use.
* Children and staff must try to sneeze/cough into tissues (never into hands), adhering to the ‘Catch it, bin it, kill it’ guidance.
* Used tissues will be put in a bin immediately after use.
* Children will be reminded not to touch their face (eyes, nose, mouth) with hands that are not clean.

**Toilets**

* Staff will ensure that the toilets do not become over-crowded by limiting the number of children who can use the toilet facilities at any one time.
* Handwashing posters are in all toilet areas to help provide a visual reminder about effective handwashing.

**PPE**

* PPE will be available in school for staff to use when taking temperatures, administering first aid or dealing with an unwell child.
* Some staff may be wearing a face mask/visor during the day and at time drop off or pick up time.

**Cleaning**

* In addition to the daily cleaning which takes place, a cleaning schedule will be implemented for more frequent cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day for high-touch areas, including door handles, light switches, toilet flushes and taps as well as toys, books, desks and chairs.
* Bins for tissues and other rubbish are emptied throughout the day.
* School will remain fully stocked with liquid anti-bacterial soap, sanitising wipes, hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial spray, paper towels, tissues and PPE equipment.

**Fire Safety and Lockdown Procedures**

* Normal procedures will be in place for fire drills. Staff will discuss these procedures with pupils.

**Attendance**

* Once back at school, email or phone the school office (02828260617)to let us know if your child is absent due to sickness.
* We must receive a reason for an absence before a child returns. This can be done via phone call or by emailing Mrs Wilson( swilson869@c2kni.net)

**IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE ARE INFORMED IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS YOUR CHILD OR ANY MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY MAY HAVE.**

**Illness in School**

***Staff and children should not attend if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household.***

* If a staff member or pupil becomes unwell with a new continuous cough, high temperature or loss of taste and/or smell, they and any members of their household within the school setting will be separated from the rest of the bubble and sent home immediately and advised to follow the PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.

**Procedure if a child displays symptoms of COVID-19 in school**

* School will contact the parent/carer.
* A staff member will supervise the child who will be isolated from others and taken to a well-ventilated area. If they need to use the toilet there is one available for use. Any staff member staying with the child will continue to look after them safely until their parent/carer comes to collect them. PPE equipment is available for staff members.
* The staff member who has looked after the child will also be given time to carry out any hygiene measures necessary.
* The N.I. Executive Test, Trace and Protect strategy will provide advice regarding testing and procedures to be followed.
* The children in the bubble will remain in school until the outcome of the test is made known.
* Parents of the remaining children in the bubble will be notified that a member of the bubble has been sent home with symptoms and that we will confirm the outcome of the test ASAP by text message.
* Where the test result is negative the child can return to the setting and to the bubble they were in, providing they are well enough and have not had a fever for 48 hours. (The school will need to see confirmation of the negative result prior to this.)
* Where the test result is positive, the rest of the bubble, including the teacher, will follow context specific guidance provided by PHA.
* The pupils can return to school when they have completed the necessary period of isolation as advised by the Test, Trace and Protect service.
* EA will be informed and relevant paperwork completed.

**Procedure if a staff member displays symptoms of COVID-19 in school**

* Staff member will return home and a replacement teacher will be brought in to teach the children of that bubble.
* The staff member will have a test ASAP.
* The children of the bubble will remain in school until the outcome of the staff member’s test result.
* If there are no available teachers to provide cover, remote learning may have to be put in place for the class bubble.
* Where a staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting and the fellow household members relating to the staff member can end their self-isolation. (The school will need to see confirmation of the negative result prior to this.)
* Where the test result is positive, the rest of the bubble will follow context specific guidance provided by PHA.
* The teacher can return to school when he/she has completed the necessary period of isolation as advised by the Test, Trace and Protect service. (COVID-19: Information for the public.)
* EA will be informed and relevant paperwork provided.

Resources for parents/carers

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/> <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/> https//www.eani.org.uk/

**COVID-19 Related Helplines-**

**NHS Advice -** Northern Ireland now has full access to the **NHS 111** helpline service on COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Callers should **press 1** when they are advised.

**Testing -** Testing for all symptomatic individuals in Northern Ireland can be booked at www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test If you have questions about a test you've booked or are having trouble booking a test, you can call 119.

**General Advice - Advice NI Website** https://www.adviceni.net/coronavirus

**Email**: covid19@adviceni.net **Tel**: 0808 802 0020

***PLEASE ENSURE THAT WHOEVER IS DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP YOUR CHILD IS AWARE OF THE ROUTINES THAT ARE NOW IN PLACE. This is very important as it avoids awkward situations.***

***This year I am teaching full -time and therefore am part of the P7 bubble. However, if I can help in anyway please do not hesitate to contact me on*** ***lmorrow225@c2kni.net*** ***or after school on 02828260617.***

***Thank you,***

***See you soon,***

***C L Morrow***

