

St. Brendan's NS Covid Response Plan

General Information for Parents

Our Covid Response Plan is designed to *reduce* risk. It is not possible to *eliminate* risk. The main purpose of the plan is

(a) to do as much as possible to ensure the safety of pupils, staff, parents and the community

(b) to ensure that the school or as many parts of it as possible can stay open in the event of an outbreak.

Everyone in the school community will have to make an equal effort to stick to the plan if we want to succeed.

Outside of school time, the best way to ensure that the school stays open is to follow the public health advice in relation to hand-washing, cough/sneeze etiquette, wearing masks, not touching face, physical distancing, only travelling for essential reasons, keeping the number of family contacts low and facilitating contact tracing.

Here are some of the main points of interest to parents:

DO NOT SEND A SICK CHILD TO SCHOOL UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS WILL PUT THE WHOLE SCHOOL AT RISK OF CLOSURE.

IF CALPOL /NUROFEN NEEDS TO BE ADMINISTERED, YOUR CHILD IS NOT WELL ENOUGH TO COME TO SCHOOL. TEMPERATURES MAY BE TAKEN DURING THE DAY IF IT IS SUSPECTED THAT A CHILD IS UNWELL.

DO NOT SEND A CHILD TO SCHOOL IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD IS SICK. CONTACT SCHOOL FOR ADVICE.

IF COVID IS SUSPECTED PLEASE ALERT THE PRINCIPAL IMMEDIATELY. THIS WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL. ONLY PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES WILL ENGAGE IN CONTACT TRACING AND MAKE DECISIONS ON SCHOOL CLOSURES.

INFORM SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT FOR ANY REASON. SCHOOL WILL CONTACT PARENTS IF CHILD ABSENT AND REASON IS UNKNOWN. EARLY DETECTION OF POSSIBLE OUTBREAKS IS ESSENTIAL FOR KEEPING THE SCHOOL OPEN.

IF TRAVELLING ABROAD YOU MUST LET THE SCHOOL KNOW IN ADVANCE OF YOUR DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL DATES. YOU MAY BE ASKED TO QUARANTINE BEFORE RETURNING A CHILD TO SCHOOL. IF A CHILD MENTIONS TRAVEL THAT WE WERE UNAWARE OF, PARENTS WILL BE ASKED TO COLLECT IMMEDIATELY WHILE THE ADVICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES IS SOUGHT.

Timetable- As before: 9.20- 2.00pm for infants; 9.20pm to 3.00pm for all other classes. However this will change very quickly to staggered start and finish times if parents and pupils do not adhere to the parking, drop/collection, exit/entrance rules. For safety reasons, we cannot allow parents/pupils to gather in groups outside the school.

Junior infants please note- Fri 28th start 10.00am to finish 12.30pm; Week 31st Aug to 4th Sept start 9.20 am to finish 12.30pm. After this date start 9.20am to finish 2.00pm

Classrooms- see school plan document uploaded to website.

Collection/Drop-offs- Pupils are encouraged to walk to and from school if at all possible. Please walk in family groups or only with friends who can be trusted to maintain 1-2 metre distance on the route to school.

Classes have been assigned separate collection and drop-off points around the school and separate entrance/exit doors to their classrooms. This is to reduce the amount of contact on footpaths, in corridors etc between pupils/staff/parents in each class.

Parents should not stand around in groups outside the school. Please drop quickly and leave immediately. Staff will be stationed to ensure pupils are conducted quickly to their classrooms.

Parking: Parents are asked to only drive up Sunset Drive if you have pupils in junior classes (from Junior Infants to 2nd classes). Drive to the end of the road, turn at the turning circle and only drop off pupils onto the same side of the road as the school. Pupils and parents should not cross the road in front of the school. 3rd-6th classes should be dropped off at the Green area or Ard na Mara (see below). Staff members will be stationed at drop-off points to ensure your child is guided safely to the classroom.

Do not park outside the school. There are "Set Down Only" areas outside the ASD unit for the buses and outside the main door (at Secretary's Office) for younger mainstream pupils.

Entrance/Exits/Lining up- Separate entrance/exits have been assigned to stop pupils and staff gathering in groups. We hope to avoid lines forming outside the school by moving children quickly to their classroom. Please do not arrive too early. Doors will open at 9.10 am and no earlier. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child arrives between 9.10 and 9.20 am and not earlier or later. There will be markers on the ground to stand on. Stay 2 metres apart outside the school. Follow the directions of staff.

Bubbles- Our class bubbles are:

- Junior and senior infants with teacher Ms Kenny and SEN teacher Ms O'Sullivan
- First class with teacher Ms Martin (sub for Mrs McKenna) and SEN teacher Ms O'Sullivan
- Second class bubble with teacher Mr McDonnell, SEN teacher Ms Cormican and SNAs Rita and Catriona
- Third and fourth class bubble with teacher Mr. Maye, SEN teacher Ms Fullard (sub for Ms Perry) and SNAs Ann and new SNA (to be confirmed)
- Fifth and sixth class bubble with teacher Ms Parslow and SEN teacher Ms Costigan (sub for Ms Henry)

- ASD unit will form one bubble with class teachers Ms O’Gara and Ms Mitchell and SNAs Hazel, Marie, Emer, Lorraine. Keva

These separate bubbles will not mix with each other. The school has been laid out physically to avoid the bubbles interacting. Staff will not be mixing with staff from other bubbles. If there is a case of Covid in one bubble, it is hoped that public health authorities will only send that bubble home to quarantine and allow the rest of the school to remain open.

Pods- within the class bubble the teacher will seat the children in groups of 5/6 pupils which are called pods. If there are books and resources to be shared, especially in junior classes, it will happen within the pod. Teacher will ensure as far as possible that there are friends near each other to help pupils to settle back in. The Pod will stay together in the classroom but it is not necessary to do this in the playground.

Social distance- Junior infants/ Senior infants and first classes are not required to keep a social distance.

Second class will be seated one metre apart.

Third will be in a classroom opposite fourth class, allowing both classes to be seated a metre between pupils.

Fifth and sixth class will also be seated a meter apart as they have been allocated the large space in the PE hall.

Parents and pupils must stand on the markers on the ground to keep a safe distance when lining up outside the school.

Hand-washing- Ensure your child washes hands thoroughly before leaving for school and immediately upon returning from school.

Each child will clean hands with hand sanitiser at the entrance door to the class each morning, going to/from playground and before leaving for home each evening. Dispensers have been installed at all doors in the school. Children do not need to bring their own hand sanitiser.

There is hot water and soap available in each classroom. Pupils will be asked to wash their hands at least once each day. There will be daily class lessons on how to keep hands clean and other covid hygiene measures.

Toilets-Toilets will be sanitised by staff twice during the school day and cleaned thoroughly by contract cleaners each evening.

Pupils must wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the toilet. New toilet roll and hand towel dispensers have been installed in each classroom and toilet block.

Please ensure that your child knows how to use the toilet carefully and leave it clean for the next person. It is not unusual for pupils to “miss” the toilet bowl in school. Please teach your child the importance of leaving a toilet clean. If an accident happens they should alert an adult immediately.

Masks- Pupils under age 13 are not required to wear a mask, but can do so if parents are happier for this to happen. If wearing, please ensure that your child knows how to handle the mask safely and has spare masks in the event that they remove one. Your child should have a sealable bag to store reusable masks immediately after removing.

Teachers are required to wear masks if they cannot maintain 2 metres distance in the classroom from other adults or pupils. All staff will wear a mask and/or visor.

Parents are required to wear a mask if entering the school building or waiting outside.

All other visitors are required to wear a mask in the school building.

Cleaning- Staff will clean surfaces with disinfectant twice per day.

Contract cleaners will clean and disinfect each evening.

Children must keep their belonging in a plastic box with lid to facilitate this cleaning.

Parents should sanitise lunch-box on arrival home each day.

Books, school-bags, boxes- No school-bags will be needed as books will not be going between home and school during the year. Place your new books, copies, pencils etc in a plastic box with a lid and your child's name clearly marked. The box should be big enough to hold your child's largest book (A4 size) but not much bigger as they are a tripping hazard. Ensure that it is deep enough to hold all the books, pencil case, copies etc. with the lid securely fixed. We will send home boxes that are too large or too small. The box is needed to facilitate cleaning of surfaces, desks, chairs in the classroom during the day.

Label your child's name on the front of books not inside the cover.

Rental books will be assigned to your child for the year, labelled and sanitised before distribution.

Homework- There will be no homework for the first few weeks to allow everyone to settle into the new routine.

You will be asked by the teacher to keep some books at home for the year. These will be used for a small bit of homework each night. The work will be simple to correct at home. There will be no homework diary. Homework (and answers if needed for parent or self correction) will be posted to Google Classroom. It will be your responsibility to let the teacher know through Google Classroom email if your child is experiencing significant difficulties with homework.

Lunch Box- The only item you have to send with your child each morning is a plastic lunch-box and drink container. You should sanitise this each day on return from school. We may sanitise next day at school also. Remember a healthy, balanced diet is an essential part of protecting your child from illness.

Uniform- Purchase additional *cheap* navy sweatpants and sweatshirts and white polo shirts so that your child will have a plentiful supply of clean clothing.

Ventilation/Coats- The rooms will be kept well-ventilated so may not be as warm as normal. Ensure that your child is dressed warmly as the winter comes in. There will be no indoor PE. Classes will exercise gently eg walking etc outdoors. Ensure that your child has a raincoat at school each day, as the teacher may take regular wellbeing breaks outside if needed.

Play Time- Classes will receive the normal amount of break times, with children eating at their desks before going outside. The class teacher and SEN teacher will supervise their own class' break times.

Jun/Sen Infants will share the same playground (next to the ASD unit) as 1st class, so times will be staggered.

2nd class will share the same playground (same as last year) with 3rd/4th so times will be staggered.

5th/6th class will have the lower playground to themselves.

ASD classes will use the new ASD playground and the large indoor space in the new ASD unit.

Covid safety rules will be taken very seriously-

- ✓ No sharing of food or drinks will be allowed.
- ✓ Direct physical contact will be discouraged.
- ✓ There will be absolutely no spitting, biting, kicking or shouting in other's faces.
- ✓ After a warning, children may be removed and sent home if these rules are broken.
- ✓ Play equipment will be sanitised between classes
- ✓ Minor grazes will be sanitised with antiseptic wipes and covered with a plaster.

Pupils at high risk- If you have serious concerns about your child returning to school due to serious health risks to your child or to a vulnerable, immediate family member, you must contact the school as soon as possible. A doctor's letter will be required. The school must alert the TUSLA School Attendance Office. Arrangements can be made with the SEN teacher assigned to the class to have appropriate work sent home or available on the Google Classroom distance learning platform.

Isolation Area- If a child becomes ill at school, they will immediately be brought to the isolation room in the porta-cabin, supervised by an adult and you will be contacted to take the child home immediately. Please ensure that your contact details are up to date on the school system and that you have someone who can come to collect your child immediately in an emergency situation.

Messages- Principal and secretary can be contacted daily on email secretary@stbrendanscartron.com or phone 071 9145449 or 0852576665. Teachers can make outgoing phone calls in the event of an emergency but cannot receive calls during class time. Direct all queries through to the Principal or secretary. Secretary's Office closes at 1.15pm. Principal's Office now located at the front of building next to the secretary's office (will be clearly marked)- knock on fire door to get attention or gain access.

Visitors- Avoid visiting the school unless in an emergency. One person at a time will be allowed into the entrance foyer at the secretary's office. Visitors will not be allowed past this entrance unless by prior arrangement. All visitors will be required to sign a contact-tracing log book prior to entering the school.

Meetings- Parent teacher conferences and meetings can be held on the phone by prior arrangement with the Principal. There will be no face-to-face meetings during the present health crisis. This will be reviewed as public health advice changes. Teachers are also happy to communicate via email.

Wellbeing- Every class will be doing activities to make children feel relaxed and comfortable at school. Wellbeing programmes are planned for each class. The teachers will also be trained to communicate a sense of calm, reassurance and safety to pupils. We ask parents to do the same. Keep your worries between yourself and the Principal/Teacher. Children need to feel safe when in school.

Please alert us immediately if your child is displaying worrying signs of anxiety eg not sleeping, tummy pains, weepy etc. Remember, all children will experience little upsets at the change of routine involved in returning to school even when there isn't a global pandemic. Try to distinguish if this is a normal level of anxiety or something that we need to intervene to improve. The school will have access to expert advice if needed. An early conversation with your child's teacher is encouraged before it becomes a major problem.

Online Learning- It is very possible that some classes or all of the school will be required to close again and online/distance learning will resume. It is a parent's responsibility to make sure that a digital device and internet access is available at home. Do not leave this until we are already in the middle of a closure period. Please let the Principal know in confidence if this is not possible in your family context and some suitable help may be arranged.

While school is opened the device can be used it to check home-work and carry out some online homework tasks that the teacher assigns while school is still open.

Children from 2nd-6th will receive lessons in school to show how to use Google Classroom independently.

Children in ASD and Junior classes will use the See-Saw app. Teachers will communicate with parents to get this set up for each child while school is still open.

Class by class drop-off, entrances and lining up- See school plan uploaded to website also.

- ✓ Junior and Senior Infants – Drop off and collect at the main door beside secretary's office. Line up on markers on pavement outside if a queue forms.
- ✓ First class- Drop off and collect at the new gate into the ASD playground. Line up in the playground, enter school with teacher via back door.
- ✓ Second class- Drop off and collect from pavement below Aftercare steps. Morning, enter via Aftercare door at front of building. Line up if necessary from the steps at the front, back towards the playground. At 3pm exit will be via the back of the building to avoid Aftercare pupils and staff.
- ✓ Third/Fourth classes- Drop off and collect at the Green and walk up Sunset Drive. Line up in main playground (where they played last year). Enter playground through gate at front of building. There will be markers on ground for 4 lines to allow for social distancing. Enter and exit the building through fire door at the back of the classrooms.

- ✓ 5th/6th - Drop off at Ard na Mara and line up in lower playground. Enter school via steps and fire door directly into PE hall.