



# School Re-opening Procedures for pupils, staff, and parents.

The following procedures have been drawn up by school staff in conjunction with the Board of Management. We ask that you read and discuss these with your child/children in a calm and reassuring way, emphasising that the teachers and staff are there to look after them while in school. Creating a safe and calm environment for our pupils is our focus. These procedures will be reviewed regularly by school staff and as public health guidance dictates.

## Underlying Principles

- The Board of Management and staff of Cahergal N.S. have a responsibility to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents, and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- The school is preparing for reopening using the Roadmap and Response Plan issued by the Department of Education and Skills. We will be following the guidance to ensure a safe environment for all members of our School Community. In line with the guidance it is preferable for all children to return to school for a full school day, five days a week.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation flexibility and goodwill of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.

## General Information

- A phased reopening of the school will commence on **Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021** with pupils in Junior and Senior Infants, First and Second Classes returning to school. Pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class are scheduled to return on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March, pending Government approval nearer the time.
- As per guidelines, all classes will operate within a Bubble System. *Each class grouping will form a Bubble e.g. Junior and Senior Infants = Bubble 1; First and Second Class = Bubble 2; Third and Fourth Class = Bubble 3; Fifth and Sixth Class = Bubble 4.*
- Pupils will only mix with the children in their Bubble during a school day.
- Within each Bubble pupils will be further divided into smaller groups called Pods. The focus of these Pods is to facilitate social distancing within each classroom. Naturally, Pods will be less formally utilised from Junior Infants to Second Class. We endeavour that a minimum distance of 1 metre will be maintained between Pods within a Bubble.
- Pupils will wear their school uniform and parents are **not** expected to wash it each day.
- **Parents of children with underlying health issues that put them at more risk of Covid-19 infection must inform the principal and class teacher.**
- We ask that parents notify class teachers in writing if their child has an allergy or skin irritation regarding the use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

- **Pupils are not permitted to bring their own hand sanitiser to school unless they have a valid medical reason which must be notified in writing to class teachers.**
- We ask that all pupils bring their own pack of tissues and keep them in their school bag.
- School staff are not expected to take pupil temperatures each day. This is the responsibility of parents if they feel their child has a high temperature or is unwell.

### **Hand Washing/Sanitising**

- **We ask that all parents ensure their child/children wash their hands prior to leaving the house for school each day.**
- Hand sanitiser dispensers will be placed at all entry/exit doors, in each classroom, support teaching rooms, staff room and kitchen.
- Pupils must use the hand sanitiser dispenser at their appointed entry door each morning.
- Hands will be sanitised before eating at both breaks.
- Hands will be washed after using the toilet and after both breaks upon return from the playground. We ask that parents discuss the importance of good hygiene in relation to toileting.
- Pupils will sanitise their hands at the end of each school day before leaving their classroom.
- Staff will oversee the above procedures.
- **Pupils are not permitted to bring bottles of sanitiser with them to school.**
- Water and soap will be available in all classrooms for handwashing.
- All classrooms will have windows open for as long as is possible each day to ensure good ventilation and minimise risk.

### **Ventilation**

Rooms will be well ventilated each morning, at break times and after school by fully opening windows. During class times windows will be partially opened to ensure fresh air circulation. **For this reason, we ask that children wear warm layers particularly if sitting near a window in colder weather.**

### **Entry Points**

- **Junior and Senior Infants/ First and Second Class** – enter via the front door of the school each morning.
- **Third and Fourth Class/ Fifth and Sixth Class** – follow the footpath to the left from the front of the school, around to the back and enter via the main back door (usually used to access the playground/basketball court for breaks).
- Doors will open at of 9.05 am and children will go directly to their classrooms. Teachers will be in their classrooms to supervise pupils until classes begin at 9.15 am. The ten-minute access time in the morning is to allow for the staggered arrival of pupils as they are dropped off and go direct to their classroom. Pupils may not gather outside the school door or in corridors in the morning.

Special Education Teachers/SNAs and our school secretary will help to supervise the entry routine each morning.

## Exit Points

- **Junior and Senior Infants** will exit via the main front door (at 1.55pm)
- **First and Second Class** will leave via the fire exit door at the end of their corridor.
- **Third and Fourth Class/ Fifth and Sixth Class** will stagger their exit through the main front door.

All classes will be accompanied by their class teacher/SNA and brought to their assigned pick up point to the front of the school. They will exit their classrooms in their Pods.

All students should adhere to social distancing of at least a metre when entering and exiting the school grounds/building/classrooms.

## Break Times

Each class will have two 20-minute breaks each day. Break times will be staggered to ensure Bubbles do not mix and that pupils have ample space to enjoy their time outside. The playground will be divided into two separate areas, one for each Bubble. A class teacher and two other staff members will be supervising on the playground at each break. As all pupils will be going outdoors for their class break times, it is important that each pupil has a suitable jacket / coat with a hood in school each day.

### Junior and Senior Infants/ First and Second Class Break Times

**10.35 am - 10.55 am      12.30 pm - 12.50 pm**

### Third and Fourth Class/ Fifth and Sixth Class Break Times

**11.00 am - 11.20 am      12.55 pm - 1.15 pm**

*Entry/Exit* - Juniors to Second Class - via Fire Exit door beside the Infant classroom

- Third to Sixth - via main back door.

## Food/Eating

**Foods should be the appropriate size and texture for junior classes. Pupils should be able to easily open and access their food. Chop fruit to bite size pieces and ensure yogurt pots are small and easily used as school staff will not be in a position to handle/open or cut fruit/food for the pupils.**

- In line with Health and Safety advice, cutlery will not be shared or distributed within the school. Therefore, if your child needs cutlery, please ensure you provide the same.

- To decrease packaging and litter, all pupils are requested to have:

A practical lunch box for their food.

- Flasks or plastic screw top bottles for drinks.

- Please ensure your child is capable of opening and closing their lunchbox and their drink bottle .

- **Pupils must bring home all of their leftover lunch and/or lunch wrappings. This minimises human contact and provides safety for all.**

- Ensure lunch boxes are emptied and washed each day.

### Access to the school for adults

- **No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building unless in the case of an emergency or requested by staff (in this exceptional event a face mask must be worn).**
- Messages for teachers can be sent by homework diary, email or by phoning the school office.
- All adults who enter the school building must complete the Contact Tracing Log.

### Collection of pupils during the School Day

If an adult must collect a pupil during the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- A note explaining the reason for collection and the time must be given to the class teacher in advance.
- When the adult arrives at the school, they must phone the office to alert that they have arrived and wait in their car.
- The pupil will be brought from their class to the front door by a member of staff. Younger children can be collected by an adult from one metre outside the front door while older pupils can walk to the adult's car.

### Car Parking/Drop Off/Collection

We ask parents assist with the smooth flow of cars in and out of the school grounds by not delaying for longer than necessary. Please be mindful of the safety of pupils and patient with other drivers.

**Congregating in small groups is against guidelines and is contradictory to the example being set for pupils.**

### Cleaning of the school

Increased cleaning of the school has been timetabled. Daily cleaning of all classrooms will now take place with desks, chairs, toilets, and all frequently touched surfaces taking priority.

### Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should **not** attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.

The symptoms are **high temperature, a cough, shortness of breath, loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.**

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately on the numbers provided. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, then the emergency name provided will be contacted.
- The pupil will be accompanied to the designated isolation area (**we have two such areas located in our G.P. Hall**) via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic pupil and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic pupil at all times. A member of the Special Education team will be asked to step into the classroom to supervise the class in the teacher's absence maintaining social distancing.

- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents where they should call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- The school will facilitate the pupil presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling the doctor listed as their G.P. in our school records.
- The child presenting with symptoms will be given a disposable face mask (provided they are not experiencing shortness of breath) and reassured in a calming fashion by the staff member.
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their G.P. by phone of their symptoms.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- **Parents can collect pupils from the G.P. Hall Emergency Exit door which is located at the back of the school, off the basketball court.**
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed.

#### **Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- Public health advice will be sought and followed

#### **Children who should not attend school**

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell

#### **Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with parents by the class teacher (and the support teacher where relevant).

## **Personal Equipment**

- It is requested that all children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc. to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment. (Infant classes will have this provided)
- It is further requested that all personal items have pupils' names displayed.
- **Children must bring a rain jacket with a hood to school every day, as it is preferable that the outdoor environment is used during breaks rather than the classroom.**

## **Shared Equipment**

- By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, shared readers and the equipment used for structured activities and play in the Infant classroom. iPads will be wiped clean after use by the teacher before being returned to their trolley. Shared readers will be wiped between uses.
- Cleaning of all shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. Toys in the infant rooms will be cleaned regularly in line with the guidelines provided in the response plan.

## **P.P.E.**

While it is not envisaged that PPE will be worn by staff in general, staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks. Staff members may be required to wear face coverings/visors where the necessary physical distancing guidelines cannot be adhered to. Pupils will not be required to wear face coverings.

## **Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may be necessary for a member of the special Education team to supervise the class on that day.

## **Physical Education**

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and any equipment used should be wiped down by the teacher after use.

## **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment to identify risks to be managed at school level has been carried out by the Board of Management.

## **Reminder to anyone attending school who has travelled abroad:**

Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone. It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those

with a rating of 'normal precautions' ("green"), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school staff, parents and children or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible.