

September Newsletter



Sept. '20

Welcome Back!

AS we are now all back and nicely settled in I would like to bring a few things to your attention and also just give you a few gentle reminders about our best and safe practices.

Class Times:

Junior - 2nd Class: Children to arrive no earlier than 9.00am for class instruction to commence at 9.10am

3rd - 6th Class: Children to arrive no earlier than 9.10am for class instruction to commence at 9.20am

These new staggered start times are working very well and I thank all parents who have been co-operating with us on this.

If a parent needs to speak with a teacher they must make an appointment and a socially distant meeting will be arranged. Where possible parents are prohibited from entering the hallway or classrooms without prior arrangement. However, meetings can also be conducted over the phone or via email which we would encourage to be the first point of contact.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff:

I would like to personally welcome back everyone and to thank them all most sincerely for their Trojan work in preparing our school for opening. Up to the end of June all of our teachers namely Ms. Collins & Ms Vickers (Sp Ed teachers), Ms. Murphy (infant teacher), Ms. Kinsella (3rd/4th class teacher) and Ms Mallick (1st/2nd class teacher) all worked incredibly hard engaging with our remote teaching plan but needless to say we are all delighted to be back in our classrooms and teaching our pupils in the normal way. Unfortunately we are without some of our very familiar faces, namely Ms Wafer and Brigid Mulhall, both of whom have retired. There are no words to express our gratitude to both of these ladies. Brigid worked tirelessly to ensure our school was always spick and span and Ms Wafer basically looked after each and everyone of us, staff and pupils alike and her presence in the school yard is so missed. However, these ladies have worked extremely hard over the years and are well entitled to a healthy and happy retirement. So that is our wish for them both and hopefully we will be able to organise a proper send off for them when the easing of Covid-19 restrictions allows us to do so. We welcome Breda Carroll, our new school cleaner and Sharon Mcloughlin our new full-time SNA. For those of you who are new parents to the school, Sharon was Ms Wafer's job-share colleague last year and is now here full-time. Both Sharon and Breda have literally hit the ground running and I feel extremely fortunate to be supported by such a wonderful staff.

Car Park:

Thank you for using the car park and from refraining from parking along the pathway. If the pupils who are collected at 2.50pm and have to wait until 3.00pm for an older sibling could remain in their parent's car it would be very much appreciated. Some parents arriving at 3.00pm have expressed their concerns for the safety of the children who may be playing with friends while they are waiting and are not aware that other cars are arriving and reversing and parking. So in the interest of safety please try and keep the children in their family cars while they wait.

Special points of interest:

- ✓ School calendar to end of year
- ✓ Class times
- ✓ Car Park
- ✓ Split The Pot
- ✓ School Communication
- ✓ GAA
- ✓ Covid-19 Info
- ✓ General News



We're delighted to be back!

Split The Pot

Our very successful Split The Pot has returned and as usual the support for it is phenomenal and I would ask you all to please keep it up. It's a vital part of our annual fund-raising. Envelopes are available in Christy's and if anyone would like a few envelopes sent home with their child for to sell to other family members don't hesitate to contact the office.

School Website:

I would like to thank Mandie O'Keeffe for keeping our website updated with any information that we send her. (Although Mandie no longer has pupils in the school she still does this on our behalf and we are really grateful). We will continually update the site with newsletters etc. and any other Covid-19 related correspondence that the Department wishes us to circulate. Prior to the school opening we had to post out all correspondence as per the Department's instructions but now that we are re-opened we will be using our School's Website to circulate information when necessary. We will always send a reminder to check the website through Text-A-Parent when this occurs.

School Absences

Under new Public Health Advice it is now compulsory to explain all pupil absences with a written note explaining the absence. There is a formal Return To Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form which can be found on the hpsc.ie website. However we are not asking parents to print this off and return after each child's absence, a written note from a parent/guardian will suffice perfectly. However if you want to look up the Formal Return form you will see for yourselves the information that the absence note must contain and specify. We thank you for your co-operation with this.

GAA Training

We welcome Paul Garrigan from Wicklow GAA County Board who has commenced GAA Training with the entire school. This currently takes place on a Friday morning and we are extremely grateful to our local club and the County Board for securing our place in this County Board/Club/School initiative.

Fundraising Initiative - 3rd & 4th Class

3rd & 4th Class are currently engaged in a wonderful fund-raising initiative in support of Breast Cancer Awareness. They are selling lovely pins/badges for your coat or cardigan for just €3 each so please support and help them raise much needed funds and awareness of this very worthy cause.

Late Late Toy Show Audition

Ms Kinsella has submitted a lovely Choral piece from her class (3rd & 4th) in a bid to get through to the first round of auditions to appear on this year's Late Late Toy Show. Keep your fingers crossed - you never know - with a bit of luck we might get a day out in the RTE Studios.

Covid-19 Letter

We have been instructed by the Department Of Education and the HSE to circulate a letter (the wording of which has been agreed by both Departments) to try and address any ongoing concerns that parents may have in the event of a confirmed case in any school setting. This letter is for information purposes only and I would ask you all to read it and keep it as a point of reference but I would also assure you all that, so far thankfully, our established guidelines and health and safety initiatives are working very well and the support that each and every family is giving to these guidelines is very much appreciated. I am also attaching a quick checklist of 'when to keep your child at home' and 'when it's okay to send your child to school' as very often parents can ring just to check in if they are doing the right thing and this checklist may help with any indecision that you may have.

I will circulate another newsletter prior to our mid-term break and in the meantime if there is any urgent correspondence which you need to be aware of I will let you all know immediately. I am attaching another copy of our School Calendar just in case anyone has misplaced the calendar that was circulated earlier in the year.

Stay safe everyone and again thank you all so much for your continued support.

PJ Nolan.

Principal.

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We're on the web;
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- Halloween Break:** School will close Friday, 23rd October @ 3.00pm and re-open on Monday, 2nd November 2020.
- Christmas:** School will close on Tuesday, 22nd December @ 12.00pm and re-open on Wednesday, 6th January 2021.
- February Mid-term:** School will close on Tuesday, 16th February, @ 3.00pm and re-open on Monday, 22nd February 2021.
- St. Patrick's Day:** School will be closed on Wed. 17th and Thurs. 18th March for St. Patrick's Day
- Easter:** School will close on Friday, 26th March, @ 12.30pm and re-open on Monday, 1 2th April 2021.
- May Holiday:** School will be closed on Friday, 30th April and Monday, 3rd May, 2021.
- June Bank Holiday:** School will be closed on Friday, 4th June and Monday, 7th June for Whit Week-end.
- Summer Holidays:** School will close on Friday, 25th June 2021 @ 12.30pm.

When to keep your child at home and phone your GP

Do not send your child to school or childcare if any of the following is true.

Your child has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- any other [common symptoms of coronavirus](#) - a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
- been in [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
- an existing breathing condition that has recently got worse

You will need to:

1. Isolate your child from other people - this means keeping them at home and completely avoiding contact with other people, as much as possible. [Read advice on self-isolation](#)
2. Phone your GP - they will advise you if your child needs a [coronavirus test](#).
3. Everyone that your child lives with should also [restrict their movements](#), at least until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.
4. [Treat your child at home for their symptoms](#).

Your child should only leave your home to have a test or to see your GP.

Follow the advice on what to do if your child:

- [is given another diagnosis by your GP](#)
- [is not tested and is also not given another diagnosis from your GP](#)
- [tests positive for coronavirus](#)
- [tests negative for coronavirus](#)

When it's okay to send your child to school or childcare

As long as your child has not been in [close contact](#) with someone who has the virus, it's usually okay to send them to school or childcare if they:

- only have nasal symptoms, such as a runny nose or a sneeze
- do not have a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more (as long as their temperature has not been lowered by taking any form of paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- do not have a new cough
- do not live with anyone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
- have been told by a GP that their illness is caused by something else, that is not coronavirus. Your GP will tell you when they can return to school or childcare.
- have got a [not detected \('negative'\) coronavirus test result](#) and have not had symptoms for 48 hours
- have not had diarrhoea for 48 hours

Children who are close contacts of someone who has coronavirus should [follow the advice to restrict their movements](#).

Runny nose or sneezing

You do not need to restrict your child's movements if the only symptoms they have are:

- a runny nose
- sneezing

They can continue to go to school or childcare if these are the only symptoms they have.

Coolfancy National School

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Roll No. 18118W

29th September, 2020.

Dear Parents and Staff

Re: If we have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school

We do not have any confirmed positive cases of Covid-19 in the school. However, it is only prudent that we consider what procedures are in place to deal with such a situation were it to arise, so that all of us are aware in advance of what happens in such an event.

Safety and Control Measures

The BoM, school leadership and staff are very conscious of the paramount need to keep all pupils, staff and visitors safe while in the school. The school is a controlled environment. There are control measures in place to combat the introduction or spread of COVID-19. These are based on:

- Physical Distancing
- Hand Hygiene
- Respiratory and Hygiene Etiquette
- Mask Wearing, where necessary.

When a person displays symptoms of COVID-19

The following steps are taken when a person (child or adult) in the school presents with suspected COVID-19 symptoms:

- That person is moved to the isolated area prior to going home. In the case of children their parents will be asked to come to the school, take them home and contact their GP for a free telephone consultation
- If the GP recommends that the person (child or adult) go for a COVID-19 test, that person is now considered a query case for COVID-19 and all of his/her household members must restrict their movements until the results of the test come back
- In the case of a negative result (98% of cases), the GP will advise when the person should return to school – usually after 48 hours.
- In the case of a positive result (2% of cases), Public Health will, by law, be informed. This may take a matter of hours due to legal and volume of work issues. The risk has been removed from the school as the person who tested positive and his/her household are at home
- The person tested, or their parents, may well be informed before Public Health. In many cases a social media discussion ensues and anxiety levels are raised among the school community.

Public Health Intervention

The Public Health Department of the HSE is the agency responsible by law for dealing with positive cases of COVID-19:

- Once notified by the HSE testing regime, Public Health Doctors assume total control of the situation and will carry out a risk assessment. Based on questioning the person with the positive result, they will ascertain if they were within the school setting when they contracted the virus. If not, there may be no need to contact the school
- If the person was within the school setting when they contracted the virus, Public Health will contact the principal to carry out a Public Health Risk Assessment. This is a set of questions to see who might have been exposed to the virus and who needs to be excluded or tested. This risk assessment will be unique to each school

- The principal and BoM have no function in the risk assessment, other than to provide whatever information is required by the Public Health Medical Officer conducting the risk assessment
- The principal and BoM may be asked to assist the Medical Office by sending a message from them to the relevant families identified in the risk assessment. Public Health will not contact other members of the school community
- The principal and BoM are not permitted to inform members of the school community of the identity of the person or persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 for the following reasons:
 - Doctor – Patient confidentiality
 - GDPR legislation prevents the publication of personal data without consent

Eileen Byrne (Chairperson)

P.J. Nolan (Principal)