



## Draft Plan For Re-opening St Aidan's National School

Principal: Paul Butler

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August 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian, Staff Member,

### **RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance**

I hope that you are well and looking forward to having your children return to school on September 1<sup>st</sup>. We have now almost finalised upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

#### **Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -**

***Increasing Separation.*** This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom.

***Decreasing Interaction.*** This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be specific routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents asked to collect them from the school.

**Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period**

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

Below you will find the schools Covid 19 response plan. I am asking all families to familiarise themselves with this plan as it lays out the procedures and routines the school must engage in to ensure maximising the safety of all our school community.

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Paul Butler  
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## **Underlying Principles**

- St. Aidan's N.S. has a responsibility to make effort 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 and to ensure that school can reopen safely for all pupils.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the cooperation 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.
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

## **Assumptions**

- All children return to school and classes will operate within a bubble. Each bubble has a number of pods of 4-6 children with the aim of socially distancing of 1m between pods. Pods may be revised between terms and mid-term where a period of 1 week has lapsed.
- As the school has plenty of yard space, breaks and lunch will operate as normal but with strict protocols around bubbles not mixing with other bubbles. Each bubble will

have a dedicated yard space and will be unable to mix with children outside this group. Yards will be marked clearly showing boundaries.

- The day will include as normal a 1- 10 minute break and 1 – 30 minute lunch with time therein to eat.
- Non touch Hand sanitiser will be available at the main entry points of the school with child friendly hand sanitiser stations in all class and support rooms.

### **Timetables**

To further provide safety measures the school will open for all children at 8.50 am except for junior infants who will come to school at 9.15am. **For parents who have a brother or sister in another class and has a child starting in junior infants, they may all come together as a family for 9.15am. This will be reviewed in October.**

Children will not line up on yard in the mornings but will instead go straight to class where their teacher will be there to welcome them from 8.50 to 9am.

**As this plan requires the co-operation of the whole school community children are not to come to school before 8.50am.**

**Teachers will communicate separately to parents on what school door to access on September 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**8.50- 9.00** – All children except junior infants (and their siblings) arrive at school and go straight to their class. For this year we are planning to use a variety of doors to access the school and this will be explained to children as they arrive on Sept 1<sup>st</sup> but will be communicated on alladin by each class teacher prior to opening. Children will also use classroom exit doors and other doors to ensure children are well distributed. This will be explained to them Sept 1<sup>st</sup> by their class teacher.

### **Junior Infants**

**9.15 a.m.** Junior Infants will arrive with their siblings. For the first few days staff will come out to welcome children of junior infants and bring them to class. Parents of junior infants are asked to remain with their child in the school yard 2m apart from any other parent/child. Staff will be available to assist for the first few days. Unfortunately this year parents are not allowed access to the main school building so we suggest any photos you wish to take please do so in the school grounds. We envisage that after the first few days junior infants will be dropped at the infant door and will make their own way into school.

**For the first 2 weeks junior infants will go home at 12pm.**

### **Timetable**

8.50-9.00 am Children come to school and go straight to class

10.50 am-11.00 am – Break time all children

12.20pm-12.50 pm – Lunch time all children

1.35-1.40 pm – Infant classes go home and will be brought to exit door where parents remain on the yard 2m apart

2.35-2.45pm – Children will be dispersed by class starting with 1st class all the way up through the school class by class

### **Entrance and Exit Points for students**

This will be explained to children 1<sup>st</sup> September and parents will receive instructions prior to school opening on what door to access the school

### **Appointment only - Adults**

● **Unfortunately no adults, other than staff members, should enter the building at any time unless you have an appointment with a staff member.** Appointments can be made through the school office. Staff will need to find a suitable place for meetings and need time to sanitise beforehand so your co-operation on this matter is appreciated.

● Messages to the school can be sent by email [scoilaodain@gmail.com](mailto:scoilaodain@gmail.com) (Principal) or [officestaidans@gmail.com](mailto:officestaidans@gmail.com) (Secretary), or by phoning the school office 094 9381679.

### **Arrival at school**

- Walking /cycling is strongly encouraged.
- There are designated parking places outside the school for children with special needs. To park here you must have the permission of the Principal. These are reserved spots.
- Children can be dropped at the main gate and walk up the lane safely to the school from 8.50am to 9am. We are asking as many parents as possible to do this. Parking on the roundabout is forbidden as this will stop the flow of traffic
- **Parents are strongly advised to wear face coverings at drop off/collection times.**

- There is no shelter indoors or on the porch on wet days but school will be opened at 8.50 to receive children. **We are asking parents not to drop off children prior to 8.50 as this will forfeit any work the school is doing to ensure safety.**

### **End of School Day**

- Adults who are collecting their children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class at the end of the day, should wait outside the school grounds at the end gate where children can walk down the lane way. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes may also use the lane way, however as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes are still young, parents may choose to collect them from the school building. But please do not park on the roundabout as this will stop the flow of traffic. It is a drop/collect and go area only.

- Jnr and Snr infant classes:

Each class will be escorted out by their teacher and children will be sent out through their designated exit point to their parent/guardian where parents can wait 2m apart in the school yard. This is the door closest to the roundabout.

### **Collection of Children during the School Day**

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived. A member of staff will alert the child that you are on site and will arrange to get your child.
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out.
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

### **Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

- We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms. Please see <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

- Likewise staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

- A designated isolation area has been created at the staff room (which has been temporarily relocated).

- If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- The pupil/staff member will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.
- If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, Parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.
- Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.
- A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic.
- The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.
- Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner immediately by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.
  - 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 and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.
- It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, *we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.*
- **It is imperative that we are able to communicate with you during the school day. If you are unavailable you need to update alladin with another contact we can use in the event of an emergency**

### **IMPORTANT**

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, the class teacher (and/or the support teacher, where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child's learning at home.

### **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

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified
- Public health advice will be sought and followed

### **Personal Equipment**

- It is requested that all children from Junior infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment. **No sharing of school supplies is allowed.**
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of Identification.

Children in Junior and Senior Infants, will be asked to provide a pouch/ pencil case which will hold each child's pencils, crayons, etc., and which will be labelled with their name. Children of older classes should also have a pencil case with their belongings and name visible. To prevent the spread of corona virus children should have a pencil case at school and one at home.

### **Homework**

For the month of September the school will not be giving written homework as the movement of books and copies between school and home is not recommended. Other tasks may be assigned instead. This will be reviewed at the end of the September.



### **Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products including fogging where appropriate will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

### **Handwashing and sanitisation**

- Children will hand wash on being to the toilet and before the eating of food. They will also sanitise at regular intervals.
- **Parents are asked to send a hand held sanitiser to school with their child. This will both speed up the sanitisation process as each child can do this at their desk and also reduce the cost to the school of providing such measures.**
- Children will sanitize before & after play.
- There will be no yard on a wet day. Children will remain within their respective pods/bubbles (They may be provided with games for their pods such as Chess/draughts/cards etc..)

### **Temperature checks**

The advice obtained by the school is that temperature checks will not be carried out daily with children or staff as this is not a reliable means of determining COVID 19 in isolation. However in case where covid 19 is suspected the school has a number of infra red thermometers that may be used to check temperature when a child or staff member feels ill. This will inform management as to the need for isolation and further action to be taken.

### **School Cleaning**

The school will have a special COVID cleaning arrangement by qualified and trained cleaners in the area of Covid 19. This will be carried out daily after each school day in addition to the normal cleaning that takes place, hoovering etc..

In addition the school will be fogging all classrooms and surfaces each evening. All door handles and surfaces will be cleaned each evening.

### **Learning Support**

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of a bubble where possible. Where Special Education Teachers are required to cover classes where a teacher is ill and a substitute is unavailable, this time will be scheduled for a further day to support the children who are impacted by this.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

### **PPE**

- Staff will be able to wear face coverings. Visors and/or face masks will be provided to all staff. Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks.
- If a staff member has their own cloth face covering, this is advisory.
- No sharing of PPE is allowed

### **Staff Room**

- Physical distancing in the staffroom is necessary and as a result the staff room is being moved to the main hall for break times to ensure social distancing.
- Staff to sanitise before entry.
- Own cutlery/ cup must be used.
- Own supplies apart from milk are necessary.

### **Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that a 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, a special education teacher will cover the class. In circumstances where an SET teacher is not available the principal will provide cover where possible. In extreme cases where it may not be possible to secure a teacher for that day it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If this is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents. This will depend on the number of

substitute teachers available and the number of staff that may be ill on any particular day.

## **PE**

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors. Children will be allowed to wear runners to school as it is envisaged that there will be an increase in participating in outdoor class activities.

## **Signage**

Signage will be on display throughout the school suggesting social distancing and safety suggestions. The school will operate a one way system where possible.

## **Extra-curricular Activities**

Extra -curricular activities will not take place during the 1st term. This will be reviewed

This plan provides a general overview of providing a safe environment for all children and staff in the school. As it is not possible to cover every eventuality this plan will be adapted to respond to new needs as they arise.

Signed

Paul Butler

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Principal

August 2020.

Signed

Fr Michael Quinn

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Chairperson BOM