

Killurney National School

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Changes in Procedures and Protocols in Killurney N.S. due to Covid-19

Dear parents,

In light of the Covid-19 global pandemic, we have had to make some changes to current procedures and protocols in our school in order to maximise distance and minimise contact between students and staff as we prepare to return to school.

We are really looking forward to getting back to school and getting the children back into their classrooms but we must be mindful of health and safety at all times.

With this in mind the following changes will apply as we begin the new school year:

Arrival to school:

- No child is to be dropped to school earlier than 9.10am each morning and playing outside before this time is not permitted.
- At 9.10 am both class teachers will open the school doors where they will be ready to greet their pupils.
- Junior Room pupils will enter the school at the lower gate (the usual gate that the children use) and walk straight to the Junior Room front door where they will greet their teacher and sanitise their hands before entering the classroom. They will then walk straight to their desk and take their seat until directed to do otherwise.
- Senior Room pupils will enter the school at the main gate, which will be wide open every morning. (This is the gate at which the staff usually park. Staff will now park at the bottom gate of the school at the entrance to the playing field) The Senior Room children will then walk straight to the Senior Room front door where they will greet their teacher and sanitise their hands before entering the classroom. They will then walk straight to their desk and take their seat until directed to do otherwise.
- Parents are not permitted to park directly outside the entrance gates as the children need to enter the school as quickly as possible.
- Parents are no longer permitted to enter the school building unless they have made an appointment with a member of staff. Anyone that does enter the building will need to fill in our Contact Tracing log on arrival.

In class:

- The junior room children will be put into 4 separate pods: Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st class and 2nd class and within each pod the children's chairs are still spaced 1 meter apart.

- All Aistear and play based activities will happen within this pod or outdoors (weather permitting).
- The children in the senior room all have their own single desk and work station. Each of these desks has been spaced 1 meter apart and has markings on the floor to ensure that the children keep these desks within their area. Each desk has been labelled with your child's name.
- Any materials that will be shared between children will be cleaned after individual use.
- New paper towel dispensers and foot pedal bins have been installed at the classroom sink and in each bathroom to ensure the children can wash their hands as quickly and safely as possible. **We also advise parents to buy your children their own mini hand sanitiser that the children can keep on their desks throughout each day especially if your child has any irritation to certain types of hand sanitisers.**
- There are 5 sanitisation stations throughout the school and we will explain to the children how and when these are to be used once we return to school.
- Following department guidelines, all staff will wear a face covering in the school building. Children in primary school do not have to wear a face covering.
- Classroom doors and windows will be kept open (weather permitting) to allow further ventilation within each classroom.

In the Learning Support Room:

- Again, there is another sanitisation station at the entry to the Learning support room and children will use this before entering the room.
- Mrs Lonergan/Ms Ryan will collect each child/group of children at their appointed time to avoid children congregating in the school hall.
- The Learning Support Teachers daily timetable will now be broken into two halves. One half of the day will be for Senior Room students, with each student having an assigned desk and the other half of the day will be for junior room students again with their own assigned desks. Cleaning of desks and chairs will occur daily between the class changeover times.

At break times:

- Children will wash and sanitise their hands before eating their lunch each day. Lunch will be eaten in the classroom.
- The outdoor play area will be divided into two zones i.e. the pitch and the basketball court. Ms Ciara Holohan will divide the zones using cones each day and will supervise to ensure the children remain in their zone. The zones will be alternated between each classroom on a daily basis e.g. Senior Room will be on the pitch on Monday but will be on the court on Tuesday. Junior Room will be on the court on Monday but will be on the pitch on Tuesday etc.
- Staff on yard duty will ensure that the children stay within their zones.
- Mrs Ciara Holohan will be out in the yard before any child is dismissed from class and class teachers will dismiss the children one class at a time.

- Wet days: On wet days, children will engage in go noodle activity breaks at their work stations, art activities/reading/jigsaws etc. at their work station or we may watch RTÉ news for kids/documentaries/movies.
- Once the school bell rings signalling the end of play time, the children will no longer line up at the steps. Instead we have spray painted various pictures on the ground outside each classroom which extends around the corners of the building. The children will each take a spot on these spray painted pictures. The junior room will line up outside the junior room and the senior room will line up outside the senior room. Their class teacher will collect them from here and again the children will sanitise their hands before entering their classroom. (We will explain all this to the children!)

-At Home time:

- Children in junior and senior infants will go home at 2pm. Junior Infants will go home each day at 12pm until Monday 14th September when they will remain in school until 2pm. The children will sanitise their hands before leaving the school building and will exit the school at the same gate that they entered in the morning.
- The rest of the children will go home as normal at 3pm. Again, they will sanitise their hands before leaving the building and will be dismissed one class at a time. They will exit the school using the same gate that they entered in the morning. (Junior Room will use the bottom gate and the senior room will use the main gate.)
- Parents are not permitted to congregate at the school gates. Please remain at your car. Mrs Holohan will assist the children exiting the school.

What to do if your child is feeling unwell?

- If your child is feeling unwell and displaying any symptoms (i.e. cough, temperature, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, loss of smell or distortion of taste) they MUST be kept at home from school and the school should be informed. At that stage you should ring your GP for advice.
- If your child comes to school displaying any symptoms, they will be escorted to our isolation unit until you come to collect them. We would advise all parents to have a close contact on standby if you are unable to collect your child.
- If your child has been identified as a contact for a person with Covid-19 they must not come to school and the school should be informed.

Principal Release days:

You may have heard that every teaching principal in Ireland has been granted one principal release day per week for the 2020/2021 school year. This is something that we have been lobbying for over the past number of years due to the colossal amount of work involved in being a teaching principal. It now means that I can concentrate on my teaching four days per week and concentrate on my administrative duties one day per week particularly since I am now taking on the role of Lead Worker Representative in the school also.

Ms Amanda Grant has agreed to cover my principal release days for me and so will be teaching in the senior room on one day per week.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Once the children return to school we will remind them of the correct way to wash and sanitise their hands and the correct respiratory etiquette (i.e. sneeze or cough into a tissue and put this into the bin, if no tissue is available sneeze or cough into your elbow). I am asking you all to please practise these routines at home with your children also before returning to school.

- Children will be required to wash their hands or use sanitiser in the following situations:
- Before and after eating
- After coughing or sneezing
- After using the toilet
- Where there hands are 'dirty'
- When arriving to and leaving the school

Check for Head lice

Whilst reading the Department's 'Roadmap for Reopening schools', I came across the following sentence 'If infection is not introduced it cannot spread.' I realised that this is also true for head lice. Therefore I am asking you all to please thoroughly check your child's hair for head lice and treat if necessary before returning to school. Hopefully, by doing this we should not have a single case this year.

Thank you all for your support as we work together to get back to school,

Tanya O'Brien