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Principal: Mr Tomás Mc Kee



29<sup>th</sup> June, 2020

## Reference: Reopening of School in August 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

I write to you regarding the recent guidelines published by the Department of Education concerning the reopening of schools in August.

First of all, I hope you are all keeping well. I am sure, like myself, you are looking forward to taking a break from home schooling. Personally, as a family initially we enjoyed embracing this new way of working but as time went on, we found it more difficult to maintain a routine, balance work commitments and home school the children. I have however appreciated the time that we have had as a family over the past few months. I would encourage you to continue to make time for some reading and number work with your child(ren) over the holidays. Reading to/with your child(ren) and setting a small amount of time aside each week for your child(ren) to log on to Mathletics should prove beneficial for when they return to school (*Mathletics is available to all children over the summer holidays. Teachers will not set tasks but all children can engage in the live Maths activities*). We also have some class revision packs which can be emailed to you on request. Please email Mrs Comiskey if you would like a revision pack: [ocomiskey765@c2kni.net](mailto:ocomiskey765@c2kni.net)

Following the publication of the DENI guidance 'New School Day' I have consulted with all staff and governors and we have agreed a proposed reopening plan. I am conscious that some of these arrangements may change between now and August. I do hope that social distancing regulations will be further decreased between children from 1 metre to zero metres although that will be determined by the spread of the coronavirus. We plan to open our school for all pupils as per current DENI guidance although if 1 metre social distancing remains in place we will have to make some adjustments to where classes are taught next year and organise extra desks for some rooms.

**Our proposed plan is as follows:** All staff will return to work the week beginning the 17<sup>th</sup> of August and the children will commence school the week beginning the **24<sup>th</sup> of August**. We will stagger the classes from P7-P2 over the course of the week so that we can ensure that all children and staff are able to return to school in a safe environment. The dates for children returning to school are as follows:

Dates	Mon 24 <sup>th</sup> August	Tues 25 <sup>th</sup> August	Wed 26 <sup>th</sup> August	Thurs 27 <sup>th</sup> August	Fri 28 <sup>th</sup> August
Classes	P7	P5, P6 & P7	P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7

All P2-P7 children will be back in school for both Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August. There will be no homework this week although children will be expected to wear their full school uniform. We will focus on some Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well-being activities with the children to help them make a smooth transition back to school. School will be closed on **Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August**, as it is a bank holiday. All P2-P7 children will return to school on **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September** and our new Primary 1 children will begin school in small groups during the first week of September, followed by some Reception children the following week.

Our core focus will be on getting school up and running in a safe and purposeful environment, bearing in mind that children will not have been in school for 5 months. Teachers will have to establish a baseline for each child so that we are able to ensure that they feel comfortable in school and make progress with their learning. Unfortunately we will not be able to offer Breakfast Club in the morning or 123/4 o'clock Clubs or other afterschool activities for the first month or so. We will continue to review our arrangements and when we feel we can offer these extra-curricular clubs we will notify you. The children will have to remain in their class bubbles when they return to school so the school carpark will be closed for cars to provide us with an extra play area. Children will receive dinner/lunch in their

classrooms and break and dinner times will be staggered. We will confirm dropping off and collection arrangements in August as the Department is yet to publish guidance regarding school transport. We will also confirm homework arrangements in August although much of this could be completed online. The children will receive reading each week so please ensure that you return all outstanding reading books from this year in August. Thank you.

I hope our proposed plan gives you an overview of our arrangements for next year. Our main priority is to get all children back to school and I am sure you will appreciate and support our plans to do this. I am conscious that some measures could change over the summer and I will contact you in August to update you on our arrangements. I have posted an online survey on our school website (**Home page: End of Year Survey - 2019/2020**) to gauge your opinion on our plans and also to receive feedback of our support over the past few months. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take some time this week to complete the survey to assist us in our evaluations of this year and our planning for next year. I will text you the survey code today. Thank you.

School uniform will remain the same next year with plain black footwear (shoes or runners) and plain navy trousers/tracksuit bottoms or skirts/pinafores permitted in school. Girls should wear navy tights or navy knee high socks. **Children may wear plain navy shorts or blue checked summer dress with white socks in August/September** and in the third term. Tracksuit bottoms with logos and coloured trainers will not be permitted. Hair accessories should be kept to a minimum. *Please ensure that your child wears full school uniform and that all items are properly labelled.*

Application forms for free school meals, school transport and uniform grants for 2020/21 should be available on the Education Authority website from July. It is very important that you register your child for free school meals even if they take lunches as the school receives extra funding from the Department of Education for children who are eligible for free school meals.

I would like to wish our Primary 7 children and their families, especially those families who bid their final farewell to our school, all the best of luck for the future. We had the Primary 7 children in school in small groups for some sports day and cycling proficiency activities. We hosted our first ever Virtual Leavers' Assembly on 19<sup>th</sup> June, which was quite emotional. Our Primary 7 children will return to school for their final hooray on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August when we plan to host our farewell party. They will then celebrate their Sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August.

I would like to thank all members of our school community for their outstanding efforts during the most difficult of times. I would like to thank our staff for all the support they provided the children and families over the past few months through: Home Schooling packs; Athletics tasks; Seesaw interactions (P1 & P2); other online learning activities; communicating with parents; virtual sports day; regular updates on our website and home school video galleries (Mrs Mc Cloy), end of year class galleries and providing supervised learning for children of Key workers. I would like to acknowledge the role of our Board of Governors who have supported our school team over the course of the past year and particularly during the last few months.

I would like to thank you our parents/guardians for the brilliant support that you have provided the school and of course your children during the most challenging of times as well as trying to manage your own commitments and worries. I know some of our families have lost loved ones during this past year and on behalf of the whole school community I offer our deepest condolences. We are very fortunate to have such a strong community and hopefully that will stand us in good stead for the challenges that we may face in the future.

Finally, to our children who have displayed excellent spirit, enthusiasm and commitment to their learning. It has been brilliant to see them in our home schooling galleries and I hope they have an enjoyable summer break. I look forward to welcoming them and our new Reception and Primary one children back to school in August and September.

School will be closed for the month of July. I will be in contact the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> August to confirm our arrangements for school reopening. Please complete the online survey on our website and contact the school if you have any queries. Thank you.

Take care and all the best,

*Tomás Mc Kee*

**Tomás Mc Kee**  
**Principal**