



St. Joseph's National School

Ballyadams, via Athy, Co. Laois

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Dear Parents,

I would like to convey our desire and expectation as a school and as a staff that the children's return to school will be positive and that school will be a place where the children are safe and happy. We are being guided by the DES Covid-19 Response Plan. Our Covid Response Plan and Covid Response Plan Safety Statement have been posted to our school website www.ballyadamsns.com

The Staff and Board of Management of Ballyadams N.S have been working hard to ensure the safe return to school for all pupils and staff next Wednesday 26th August. We have now finalised our plans for drop-off and collection of the children every day.

Thank you to all parents for their cooperation and understanding in terms of adhering to and maintaining our new arrival and collection routines. We would request that where at all possible, you do not come onto the school grounds or into the school building unless it is an essential visit. We appreciate that dropping off the Junior & Senior Infant pupils to their line in the yard is essential, but for the older pupils the Church Car Park is the designated drop off point. Working together we hope to be able to progress the reopening in as safe a manner as possible for all.

We would ask all parents to familiarise themselves with the following drop-off and collection routines for the safe delivery and collection of pupils from school. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year.

Children may enter the school grounds from 9.10am each morning from the usual playground entrance. They will be supervised on the playground in their Class Bubbles between 9.10 – 9.20am. Children will access their classrooms @9.20am each morning from designated entry points from the school playgrounds.

The Junior & Senior Infant and 1st and 2nd Class Bubbles will be located on the Church Car Park side of the playground in the morning @ 9.10am.

The 3rd & 4th Class and 5th & 6th Class Bubbles will be located on the Quarry side of the playground in the morning @ 9.10am.

The teaching staff will be present in the school yard to ensure the children are given a warm welcome back to school and given every assistance in assembling in their Class Bubbles and separate yard spaces before school begins.

It is imperative that;

- adults do not come within 2m of each other.
- parents do not try to have meetings with members of staff in the playground at drop-off and collection times – meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement.
(This may have to be more restrictive depending on guidance - it is quite possible that the recommendation will be for remote meetings/telephonic communications.)
- all parents adhere to the drop-off and collection plans as outlined below

Drop-off Plan

- It is essential children do not enter school grounds until 9.10am.
- **Our school day still begins at 9:20am.**
- **Junior Infants will begin their school day at 9.30am from Wednesday 26th August until Friday 4th September. Parents are encouraged not to escort infants into the school grounds before 9.30am.**
- Children being dropped to school should walk from the Church Car Park drop off point to the normal playground entrance.
- Please remind children to maintain physical distancing between themselves and their schoolmates when walking from the drop off point in the Church Car Park to the school entrance.
- Parents should not accompany children from the Church Car Park with the exception of Junior & Senior Infant Parents.
- All children will enter the school at the playground entrance at 9.10am with the exception of children arriving on the bus who will enter at the bus drop off point.
- Upon entering the school grounds at the playground entrance children will be directed by teachers to their respective yard spaces.
- Children in the 3rd & 4th Class Bubble and 5th & 6th Class Bubble will be directed to their designated yard spaces on the Quarry side of the school playground.
- Children in Infants and 1st & 2nd Class Bubbles will be directed to their designated yard areas on the Church Car Park side of the school playground.
- Children arriving to school on buses will be directed to their respective Class Bubbles and playground areas upon arrival. A message in relation to protocols being implemented by bus companies for children travelling to school will be communicated to families of children travelling on the bus in the coming days.
- Staff will be present to assist the children access and proceed to their designated Yard Areas and Class Bubbles.

- Parents are reminded that the Church Car Park is a drop off & collection point and should not remain in the Car Park any longer than necessary.

Collection Plan

- We ask parents to remain in their cars in the Church Car Park, **away from the school entrance when collecting** children at the end of the day to allow children to leave the school safely and promptly.
- To facilitate a staggered closing time classes will alternate between leaving at **2:50pm and 3pm**.
1st and 2nd Class and 5th & 6th Class will leave at 2.50pm.
3rd & 4th will leave at 3pm.
This arrangement will continue for the first number of weeks and may be subject to change upon review.
Children who finish at 2.50pm and will be taking the bus home @3pm will be supervised in the school until they board the bus to depart for home @3pm.
- Senior Infants will be collected from the school yard at 2pm. Parents are asked to maintain their **social distance** when collecting children.
- Junior Infants will be collected at 12.30pm Wednesday 26th – September Friday 4th after which Junior Infants will finish their school day at 2pm.

Please Note

- **Parents are not permitted to enter the school building** unless arranged by prior appointment.
- You can contact teachers through Aladdin Connect / teachers school email address or by calling Pam in the office to schedule a phone call or appointment.
- If a child has to be picked up early during the school day to attend an appointment, we ask parents to ring the school bell when they are outside. We will walk your child outside the building. **Please do not enter the school building**. Similarly, if your child is returning from an appointment during the day please ring the school and we will meet you outside (059 27226)

How to help:

- **Children MUST NOT attend school with ANY cold or flu symptoms.**
- Please take your child's **temperature and wash their hands/ensure children wash their hands** before school each morning.
- We would encourage all children to use the toilet and wash their hands before leaving home for school.
- Please let us know if your contact details or emergency contact details have to be updated.
- Talk to your child and let them know that the return to school is going to be safe and happy. Be positive about this return.
- Start to practise regular handwashing and how to cough and sneeze safely.

- As always everything should be **labelled**. Due to Covid-19 doing this is essential. There will be no sharing of anything. Label everything clearly with your child's name - coats, shoes, lunch boxes, school bags, uniform, books, copies, pens, eraser, pencil sharpener etc.
- Put **plastic covering** on all copies and books so that we can keep them clean.
- Every child should have a lunch box and drink bottle. It is very important that these items are washed in soapy water every day at home. It is important that the lunchbox and drink bottle are made of a material that can be disinfected.
- There is no reference in public health guidance to daily washing of **school uniforms** or any clothes. Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr Ronan Glynn has confirmed no such advice has been issued by health authorities. If parents wish children may alternate between school uniform and the PE uniform to allow for washing. We will continue to advise here subject to newly received guidance advice from the H.S.E and Department Of Education.
- Balls or any equipment are not permitted in the school yard in the morning before school begins.

Measures we are putting in place in the school;

- The school now has hand sanitiser pumps at all entrance/exits. Everyone who enters the school will be asked to sanitise their hands.
- Hand sanitiser pumps will be in all classrooms and children will be asked to wash their hands regularly during the day especially after playing outside and before eating.
- Signage will be visible around the school encouraging good habits and practices to ensure good hygiene is observed.
- Floor signs will facilitate safe passing in the corridor.
- Each room and all surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected every day.
- Staff will wear face shields/masks in situations where they cannot maintain a 2 metre distance.
- Each class will be in a bubble and will not mix with any other class bubbles. Within the class bubble children will be in small groups (pods). There will be a distance of at least 1 metre between all pods.
- The school will provide each child with a **plastic box** to store all their books in. Children will leave their pencil cases in school every day also.
- Children will be supervised in their respective Class Bubbles between 9.10 – 9.20am.
- We will be operating a staggered yard time with reduced numbers on the yard to ensure children only interact with those in their class bubble.

Le meas,

Fr Daniel Dunne – Chairperson Ballyadams Board of Management

Rory Stapleton – Principal Ballyadams N.S

Images of changes we have made to the school environment and useful resources will be posted in the days to come on our school website in the 'School Re – opening section'. It may be helpful to show the children pictures of changes to the school environment in advance of re – opening next Wednesday the 26th.

Further information will be communicated to Parents through our whole school communication system Aladdin Connect. Please continue to use and access the Aladdin Connect App for information and updates from the school. Many thanks.

A F.A.Q section has been added to our school website www.ballyadamsns.com Please contact the school office between 9 – 1pm if you have any further queries 059 – 8627226.

I am contactable via email principal.ballyadams@gmail.com if you require any further assistance in advance or re – opening.

I would like to welcome families who are new members to our wonderful school community in Ballyadams. On behalf of all the teachers and staff I wish you all every success and happiness as your children begin an important chapter in their young lives in Ballyadams N.S.

All our teachers and ancillary staff have invested much time in preparation for the safe re – opening of our school. All families have all made enormous sacrifices and overcome challenges posed by Covid 19 to oversee the children's learning from March until June. We are looking forward to welcoming all the children back to school and into their new classes in what will be a joyous day for all in our school community.

We are buoyed by the resilience and adaptability of the children and we look forward to supporting all the children to ensure a positive transition back to school in the coming weeks. The message for the initial re – opening period will be 'Slowing down before we speed up'. Our priority as a school upon re - opening will be enhancing the wellbeing of the children and all in our school and ensuring their safe and happy return.

I would like to wish all our pupils and their families every blessing, safety and success in the 2020 /21 school year.

Thank you to all our families for your support and understanding as we work together to ensure the safe return of the children to school. Remember to continue to stay safe and enjoy the remainder of the holidays.

Ní neart go cur le chéile
Rory Stapleton
Principal

