



Back to School Parents' Update 19th August 2021



Dear Parents,

Having received updated guidance for school from the Department of Education at 5:20pm yesterday evening, I am writing to you to update you on arrangements for the children's return to school next week. As explained in the video-message I sent out last week, families should expect the new school year to start off very much from where the previous academic year ended in June. I can now confirm that this will be the case. Most parents will be aware that the number of cases in our area have been quite high in recent weeks, with The Covid Dashboard reporting 1,345 new cases and 11 Covid-linked deaths across Northern Ireland yesterday (Wednesday 18th August). There will be some in-school relaxations however, with our approach to managing Covid being reviewed at Halloween.

What will remain the same?

- Children who show possible signs of Covid (high temperature, persistent coughing, loss of taste and/or smell) should not be sent into school. Of course any child who is feeling ill in any way should not be sent into school as doing so only spreads sickness. If your child is sick, please contact school to let us know.
- Children will come directly into the school building each morning through designated year group doors:

P1	P1 entrance door	P6	Computer suite entrance door
P2	P2/3 entrance	P7	Main front entrance door
P3	P2/3 entrance	HIU 1*	Main front entrance door
P4	KS2 playground door	HIU 2*	Main front entrance door
P5	KS2 playground door at rear of reception area	*HIU pupils arrive at different times from P7s	

- Teachers will sanitize children's hands/supervise handwashing upon arrival.
- Parents should not gather in groups around school gates or doors.
- Only essential visitors admitted to school (contractors etc.). Parents should make all inquiries via the school office (☎ 90 401246) and use the green drop-off box located at the school's main entrance for things such as forgotten homework or packed lunches.
- Children will be dismissed at the end of the school day from their year group's designated door.
- Hot school meals will continue to be served in classrooms (this will be reviewed).

What will be different?

- Pupils can come into the school building between 8:45am – 8:55am. Our school day starts at 8:55am. Children arriving after 8:55am will be recorded as being “late”; children coming late disrupts teachers trying to begin morning lessons.
- When outdoors, in the mornings for example, school staff may choose not to wear face visors or masks.
- Children are allowed to bring school bags, pencil cases and lunch bags. However, children should not share stationery. The school’s water fountain will still not be in use, so pupils should fill water bottles at home before coming to school (pure water only).
- School will return to its pre-Covid practice of closing early for all pupils on Fridays only. Consequently, children will finish on Mondays-Thursdays at the normal times for their year groups and all pupils will finish at 2pm on Friday afternoons.
- We look forward to restarting a reduced number of extra-curricular clubs in September.
- We are also working on plans on how we can restart our school’s breakfast club in a week or two.

I would ask all school families to help school by continuing to take the threat of Covid seriously. The difference between this September and last, is that we are increasingly learning to ‘live’ with the Coronavirus – as it is not going away.

My main concern as school principal, has to be the health and wellbeing of my pupils and staff. I would rather start off with extra care with the aim of being “Better Safe than Sorry”.

I will be in touch should there be any further news I need to share ahead of the children starting back on Friday 27th August. School finishes at 12 noon on this day, with no dinners or packed lunches.

Despite ongoing restrictions, we look forward to a great year ahead!

Yours sincerely,

