



Davidstown Primary School

053 92 34745

info@davidstownps.ie

Covid 19 Response Plan – Information for Parents

Junior Infants' First Day

Parents and children should come to the right of the school building. The infants' area in the morning is between the white lines near the gate and the shelter. You will see markings on the ground for line-up. The children will be collected by Ms Doyle at 9.20 and brought to class. Parents must wear a mask and observe social distancing.

The new junior infants will finish at 12.30 for the first two weeks until Friday 11th September and will then finish at the normal infant time of 2pm. Please ensure you have childcare arrangements in place for the earlier finishing time.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Sanitiser dispensers are installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, at the door of each classroom, etc. Soap (which emulsifies at low temperatures) and water is available in all classrooms and toilets. Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

Handwashing and Sanitising Regime

Time	Method
Upon entering school	Sanitiser
Before eating at little break	Handwashing
After returning from the yard	Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
Before eating at big break	Handwashing
After returning from the yard	Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
Before going home	Sanitiser
*After using toilet	Handwashing

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, desks, sink and toilet facilities. All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Waste will be collected daily by our cleaner.

Changes to Classroom Layouts

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.



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The children and their teachers will work in class bubbles. A class bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class - from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from junior infants to 2nd class to maintain a physical distance within their class bubble. However, we have formed pods within our bubbles in the infants and middle classroom. There is 1m minimum seated distance between each pod in these rooms and within the pods where possible. At present, there are 6/7 children in each pod. Teachers are modifying and clearing their classrooms to provide as much space as possible.

Children from 3rd class to 6th class will be distanced insofar as is practicable, with approximately 1m – 1.5 distancing achieved in their classroom, which will now be the G.P. room.

Learning Support

In keeping with our special educational needs (SEN) policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class and withdrawal support. Initially, the focus will be primarily on welcoming the children back, giving them a chance to speak about how they feel, and establishing relationships and routines.

The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of the minimum amount of class bubbles.

- 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 the SEN room, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group. Only pupils from the same class bubble may be withdrawn together for SEN purposes
- The tables and chairs in SEN rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending. Where possible, resources in SEN settings will be stored in individual pouches for each child in order to limit sharing, and the pouches can then be wiped and sanitised.
- SNAs will continue to provide support and will wear appropriate PPE. They will bring the children outside as much as possible. SNAs will remain with their specific bubble during the day, including yard time.



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Entrance and Exit Points for Specific Classes

To facilitate pupils arriving, entering and exiting the grounds safely, we ask that no pupils be present on school grounds before 9.10 as there is no supervision before 9.10. From 9.10 to 9.20, staff will be supervising at the three morning yard areas. Pupils can enter the school grounds and proceed to their yard area, where their class teacher will be waiting for them to enter the school at 9.20.

Pupils must remain in these specific areas as this is their class bubble. The department has instructed that bubbles must not mix.

Junior and Senior Infants: Assemble in the morning in the area between the white line markings. This is to the right of the school building, between the front of the school and toward the shelter. Collection from the same door at home time.

1st and 2nd class: Assemble in the morning at the front of the school, between the yellow line markings near the main front entrance. Collection from outside the main gate at home time.

3rd – 6th class: Assemble at the rear of the school in the morning, as per last year. Pupils will exit the grounds from the gates at the bus bay, at home time. Parents of pupils in this class may choose to walk home, park and stride from the car park in the village or cycle to and from school. There is now a bike stand installed at the rear of the school.

Lunches

Pupils will be given time to eat lunch as usual. We will be asking parents to remind pupils to eat directly from their lunch boxes, and not to use the surface of the table to place their food on. Pupils will not be given spoons or cups from the staffroom. Please ensure that your child is able to open their lunch items themselves. Remind children that sharing of food is not permitted. Lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be washed thoroughly, inside and out, each day.

Yard Time

The yard to the rear of the school will be used as usual in previous years. On a dry day where the pitch is suitable, 3rd- 6th will play on the pitch, 1st and 2nd will play on the middle and left half of the basketball court and the infants will play on the right half of the court and the outdoor classroom and hut. On a wet day, the senior class will have the upper yard for playtime, 1st and 2nd will have the left of the court and the infants will have the right side of the basketball court. Each bubble will have their own balls, skipping ropes etc. to play with at break. These will not be shared between bubbles and will be cleaned regularly.



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PE

PE will take place outdoors as usual and use of equipment should be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. Classes may take additional movement breaks outside during the school day.

Pupils' Equipment and Stationery

In so far as possible, it is requested that children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc. to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment. This should be kept in school and separate items should be kept at home for homework as necessary.

We intend to limit items, including books and copies, being brought between home and school.

Please ensure that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

1st – 6th class desks now have baskets for storing books and belongings.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, PCs and the equipment used for structured activities and play in infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place after use to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. In the senior room there will be a Chromebook assigned to each child for use in school. These devices will not be brought home or shared in school.

PPE

The Department of Education advise that facemasks should be worn by all staff who cannot maintain a 2m social distance from pupils. The BoM is supplying all staff with the personal protection equipment they will need. Gloves and aprons will also be provided for providing intimate care or first aid.

Ventilation

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces. To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible.



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Assembly

Whole school gatherings, including assemblies, will not take place for the foreseeable future. Assemblies are important in our school community, to celebrate and share our ideas and successes. In place of a whole school assembly we will have a live, digital assembly including all classes.

Payments

Parents will be invited to use an online payment system that minimises the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for payment online. Details will be available shortly.

Wet Days

On wet days the classes will remain indoors as normal. The teacher on duty will supervise from the classroom door and only enter the room if absolutely necessary.

Corridors

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that 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, a SEN teacher will supervise the class. The class will not be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. If we cannot source a supervising teacher, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

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 new intercom 'Ring' device at the main front door.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff.
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out.

No adult can enter the school building, unless invited to do so.



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Children Who Should Not Attend School

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.

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.

Illness and Absences Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should not attend school if they are unwell or displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil is unwell or displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately – please ensure all contact details are up to date and in use, and also provide the name and number of a contact who will be in a position to collect a child promptly.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.



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A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms, if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises

- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.

Parents should seek advice from their GP/consultant if they think their child is in a high risk group. If they are advised not to attend, then the parents should furnish the school with a letter containing words to this effect. The school will then support the child with his/her learning.

FAQs

What is happening with homework? For the first few weeks, there will be no homework. We are currently discussing homework procedures for the rest of the year. We will let you know when we have finalised these procedures.



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Can I send in a bottle of sanitiser with my child? Yes, but please remind your child it is for personal use and it may only be used with the permission of the teacher. Regulations stipulate that children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.

Can my child wear a facemask or visor? It is not recommended that children attending primary school or preschool/childcare settings wear face-coverings; however, this is at your discretion.

Will staff be wearing facemasks? Yes and possibly visors also.

Will parent/teacher meetings be taking place? We are awaiting further guidance.

What if I need to speak with my child's teacher? There is no school journal this year. We are using Seesaw in its place. Please use Seesaw to send in messages, notes, to explain absences or to contact your child's teacher. Please contact the office in an emergency.

What happens if my child's teacher is out sick? Every effort to find a substitute will be made. If one cannot be found, the SEN teachers will be asked to supervise the class. If we cannot supervise the class, we may have to send the children home.

What happens if my child forgets their lunch or drinks? The school will contact you so you can drop one to the school for your child.

My child has hay fever and sneezes quite a bit, will he/she be sent home? If your child has an underlying condition such as hay fever, please make sure the class teacher is aware. In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are: • High temperature • Cough • Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties • Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste.

What if my child is sent home ill or with a suspected case of Covid 19? We would advise that you contact your GP/HSE for further advice. If a child is unwell they should under no circumstances be sent back to school until they are fully recovered.

Are parents/ others permitted in the school building? No, not unless collecting a pupil presenting with Covid 19 symptoms.

My child is in a "pod" with some other children, can they still play with their other classmates at break time? Yes, absolutely, when out in the yard. On wet days, the children will remain in their pods. But they can still chat with children in other pods as long as they keep the distance between the pods. Please do not ask for your child to be moved to a different pod. Pods will be changed after Hallowe'en, Christmas and Easter.



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At the start of the school year we will be distancing pupils as much as possible, with approximately 1m – 2m between all students. This will not eliminate pupils from interacting with each other or prevent talk and discussion. Pods will be alternated after Hallowe'en, Christmas and Easter.

What happens if my child falls on yard/gets a bump or cut? Our first aid policy will be followed, but staff are required to wear PPE to apply first aid.

Why can some of the classes not mix? They are playing soccer/GAA together anyway! That may be the case for some of the pupils, but our procedures are governed by Department of Education guidelines, which state that every effort must be made to limit the amount of contact between “bubbles”. We do not adhere to the guidelines of other sporting /social organisations.

Will teachers talk to the children about Covid 19? Yes, we will be teaching cough etiquette, hand hygiene, reinforcing the idea of social distancing/reduced physical contact, and chatting (in an age appropriate way) about Covid 19. The aim will be on reassurance and promoting calmness and safety.

Will the children wear their uniform? Yes, there is no guidance from the Department of Education or HSPC regarding uniform. Parents may choose to purchase generic jumpers and tracksuits to wash daily but that is at parents' discretion.

Will the school be cleaned each day? Yes, and all staff will monitor their rooms to ensure safe practices are applied.

What will be the most difficult issue for schools and parents? Children presenting unwell or with symptoms of Covid 19. We will have to ring you and you will have to come and collect your child immediately. Your child will have to be brought to the isolation area. These are the government guidelines. We are not qualified to make a distinction between Covid 19 symptoms and symptoms of other illnesses. Be prepared. Make arrangements for your child to be collected in the event of a phone call.

Will this document be updated? Yes, it is an evolving situation and we will most likely have to change elements of it when we observe it in practice. We will be reviewing our procedures constantly. We will also be in contact with you closer to the return to school date with more information.