

Daingean National School

Daingean, Co. Offaly, R35AH95

Roll Number: 16620T

Phone: (057) 9353337

Email: office@daingeanns.ie



August 23rd, 2021

Dear Parents,

The BoM and School Staff are looking forward to welcoming all our pupils and parents / guardians back to school for the 2021/2022 school year on Thursday August 26th.

We are satisfied that we have control measures in place to ensure that this will be a safe re-opening. We would like to thank you for your co-operation to date and hope that the year ahead will be a safe and happy one for all of us.

Our Arrangements for Morning Drop off and Evening Pick Up

Parents of Junior Infant pupils may drop their children to the door of the classroom on Thursday and Friday morning (August 26th and 27th). From Monday August 30th you will drop your child at the gate near the carpark. There will a hand over to school staff.

Junior Infant pupils will go home at 12.30 p.m. until September 10th.

Mornings

Children will enter and leave the building as follows:

Senior Infants, First and Second Class: Enter through gate near car park and go straight to classroom door.

Third and Fifth classes: Enter school yard through middle gate and enter school through main cloakroom door

Fourth and Sixth classes: Enter school yard through gate at town-side and enter school using door near school hall.

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 9.10a.m.

Parents are asked to 'drop and go' anytime between 9.10a.m. and 9.30a.m.

Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival. Other staff members (including Special Education Teachers, SNAs and the Principal) will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to show them to their classrooms.

You will see that there is building work going on at the front of the school at the moment which may make drop off and collection more difficult for the first few days. We will all need to be patient.

It will not be possible for parents to come onto the school grounds before or after school.

To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not come onto the school grounds before 9.10a.m.

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Afternoons:

2.00 p.m. Class teacher will bring **Senior Infants** to the school gate. Parents are asked to pick up and go.

Playschool staff will collect children who go to afterschool at this time.

2.50 p.m. Children who travel by school **bus** will leave. They will be accompanied to the bus by a teacher or SNA.

Children going to **afterschool** in Daingean Community Childcare will be collected at this time.

2.55 p.m. Children from 1st to 6th classes with **no sibling** in 1st to 6th classes will leave. They will exit the same gate as in the morning.

3.00 p.m. All other children will leave- Families with eldest child in 4th or 6th classes will exit gate at town-side. They will wait for parents in marked spots on yard.

Families with eldest child in 2nd, 3rd and 5th classes will wait for parents in marked spots in yard and will exit through car park gate. This is the only change from morning routine.

To allow this new system to work efficiently, it is important that drop off and pick up are done both quickly and safely while at all times adhering to 2m distance as per government guidelines.

On our first day back (Thursday), teachers will practice this with the children.

This system will apply every day so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather!

To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are encouraged to walk or cycle to school if it is at all possible.

Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, handshaking and hugging will not be allowed.

Breaktimes

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. We will have staggered yard breaks until further notice to ensure that we can effectively ensure the safety of each class bubble and staff members.

Pods and Bubbles

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod. All unnecessary furniture has been removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible. Teachers will decide on who goes in each pod the same way they always decided on class groups.

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. We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when walking in the corridors.

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Lunches

School lunches will be available from Monday September 13th.

Until then, please make sure that children bring their lunches to school with them, to avoid adults having to make arrangements to drop off lunches during the day.

Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

Personal equipment my child brings to school?

Insofar as possible, it is requested that children bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own **pencil case** to avoid the sharing of equipment. Pencil cases will remain in school and where possible they should be made of a material that can be wiped preferably plastic (not soft and fluffy). It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

Children in 3rd to 6th classes will be provided with **personal trays** to store all their copies, textbooks, readers, dictionaries etc. The trays will be stored at their desks and won't be handled by other pupils.

Shared equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including iPads 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 at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

Collecting your child from school early

We really ask that this happens only for medical appointments and emergencies only.

If a child has to go home early, it will only be facilitated by prior knowledge.

What if you want to contact a teacher or the school?

As always, we are available to speak with you as and when needed. However, for the moment, staff will now only be able to respond to messages that are sent via email or phone. If you wish to speak with a teacher, please email the office at office@daingeanns.ie.

School uniforms

Your child should wear uniform as normal on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays.

School tracksuit should be worn on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Schoolbags and coats

Children should bring a schoolbag to school on the first day. This schoolbag will remain in school.

Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

Pupils will be asked to wash their hands:

- On arrival at school
- Before eating or drinking
- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When their hands are physically dirty
- When they cough or sneeze

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We have hand sanitiser units in all classrooms, bathrooms, staff room and reception area. All pupils from 3rd Class to 6th classes will be provided with individual hand sanitizer as this worked well last year.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned.

Further details on Homework, PE days, Log in details for school lunches etc. will be sent next week via Aladdin App.

Here are some links in relation to the **Return to School** which were received from the Department of Education on August 18th.

- Video advice for parents and students at different levels
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/#returning-to-school>
- Posters/graphics advice for parents
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/#returning-to-school>
- Communications to Parents regarding School Transport – SEN and Primary
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/64a88-school-transport/>
- Multilingual advice for parents
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0cf46-resources-and-materials-for-parentsguardians-and-for-students-on-returning-to-school-multi-lingual/>

What can you as parents do to help with school re-opening?

- Practice handwashing with your children. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>
- Please do not send your children to school if they are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms.
Children who display such symptoms in school will be brought to the designated isolation room and parents will be asked to collect them from the school.
- Please ensure that the school has your up-to- date details and that the people on your contactlist are available at short notice to collect your child.
- We ask that no child is on the school grounds before 9.10 a.m. as this is a risk to the health and safety of everyone.
- Please complete a Return to Education form for your child on Aladdin, which will be available on Wednesday morning.

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First Communion

As previously notified, First Communion will take place on Saturday September 11th. There will be two masses – one at 11a.m. and the other at 1 p.m. Further details will be available later this week.

We had some teaching positions to fill over the summer and here is the full list of teaching staff for 2020/21.

Principal	Ms. Moynihan
Junior Infants	Miss Murray
Senior Infants	Ms. Healion
First class	Miss Whelan
Second class	Mr. Kelly
Third class	Ms. Hannon
Fourth class	Ms. Dalton
Fifth class Room3	Miss Murray
Fifth class Room4	Miss Kieran
Sixth class& Deputy Principal	Ms. Ruttledge

ASD class teachers

Junior SONAS	Miss Madden
Senior SONAS	Mr. Conneely

SEN Teachers

Ms. Farrell and Ms. Moore (job sharing)
Ms. Brereton and Mrs. O'Rourke (job sharing)
Mrs. McCormack
Miss Earls
Miss Fox (Reading Recovery)
Ms. Purcell shared with Educate Together Tullamore (2 days)

We look forward to welcoming everyone back and hope that we will all enjoy a full year of face-to-face teaching and learning.

If anyone has any queries, please contact me by email at principal@daingeanns.ie or by phone at 057 9353337.

Kind regards,

Eileen Moynihan

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Here I have included a few of the most relevant sections from our Covid Response Plan.

Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of [cold](#) and [flu](#).

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), [self-isolate](#) (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need [a free COVID-19 test](#).

Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoiding the virus, if you have it. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE [Website](#). Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised. If you **do not** have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a [COVID-19 walk-in test centre](#).

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Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, pupils must not attend school if they display any symptoms. (HSE [Website](#))

A designated isolation area has been created in our main cloakroom area.

If a pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times

The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.

A face covering will be provided to the child presenting with symptoms. He or she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises

The child who is symptomatic will be reminded to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

If the child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.

Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms.

Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.

If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

Ventilation

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools'. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. The Department has also published guidance regarding on how these practical steps measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) monitors. Links to all aforementioned guidance can be accessed here.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools>

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Face Coverings/Masks

It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face coverings coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

It is not recommended that children attending primary school wear face-coverings.

Further advice from the HPSC on the use of face coverings in educational settings was received on the 6th August 2020. This advice is available [here](#).

All staff wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

Information should be provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6ZqdpLfSqw>

Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled. Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.