

Back to Ballytober.....on 8th March!

We are delighted that P1/2/3 pupils will return to Ballytober on Monday 8th March. Hopefully they will soon be followed by the rest of the school. As before, our common goal continues to be that we see a successful full-time return to school for the P1-7 pupils in the near future.

Please take the opportunity to talk through the arrangements with your child so that they know what to expect when they arrive back at school next week, especially those in relation to coming in first thing in the morning. They are exactly the same as before, so it is only a matter of refreshing everyone's memory.

- * **P1/2** walk independently from main pedestrian gates
 - * **P3-7** walk independently from the car
 - * Walk directly to their classroom
- * Place their lunch bag and water bottle in the designated storage box
 - * Place their pencil case in their designated storage tray
- * Place their sanitiser and paper tissues in their designated storage tray
 - * Sanitise their hands
- * Place their coat over the back of their designated chair
 - * Wash their hands
- * Sit at their designated desk until school starts at 9.00am

Teachers and classroom assistants will be on hand to closely supervise, and more importantly support, the pupils every step of the way. Every effort will be made to help your child develop the resilience and positive attitude required. Children are remarkable. They adapt to situations brilliantly, especially when their role models are consistent in their approach.

Do not hesitate to contact the school about any concerns you or your child may have about returning to school. There may well be something we have unintentionally overlooked, so please make us aware if necessary.

In the meantime, read the attached information carefully. This details the current arrangements. Some may be amended over the next few weeks to take new guidance or regulations into account, but for now they will be consistently followed throughout the school.

In the unlikely event that any of you have been on holiday recently, please read carefully the information below regarding Corona (COVID-19) international travel advice. These extracts have been taken from the nidirect government services website. Additional detail is provided there. Please contact the school directly for further clarification if required.

“Self-isolation for 10 days following international travel is a legal requirement and an important measure to reduce the risk of spreading Coronavirus (COVID-19) as it can take up to 10 days for coronavirus symptoms to appear, and you can spread Coronavirus (COVID-19) before you develop symptoms.”

“You must complete 10 days of self-isolation even if you had a negative pre-departure test, or a negative test during the isolation period, as it can take up to 10 days for the infection to develop.

“If you’ve returned from travel and are required to self -isolate, to protect others, you should not go to work, school, or public places.”

The successful return to school requires all those in the school community to deploy effective measures to manage risk. Pupils and staff need parents and the wider community to remain vigilant, and to act responsibly within the public health guidelines. COVID-19 is still in our community and we all have such an important role to play in managing the risks involved. Our combined efforts will ensure the school continues to operate at full capacity, without any undue interruptions.

Elaine Anderson
Principal

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing measures fall into two broad categories. They either aim to increase separation or alternatively, decrease interaction. Our current routines apply to pupils, staff and parents.

- * Staggered starting times to avoid congestion in main building and at gates
 - 8.40am P4/5 Entrance via playground route to mobile
 - 8.40am P6/7 Entrance via main door
 - 8.50am P1/2 Entrance via main door
 - 8.50am P3 Entrance via playground route to mobile

Families with one child coming to school should arrive at the allocated time. For those families with two or more coming along, younger siblings may come into school at 8.40am if they have a brother or sister in P4/5/6/7.

This will hopefully help decrease waiting times for parents outside school.

PLEASE LEAVE YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL AT THE ALLOCATED TIME.

CHILDREN MUST NOT BE ON SITE AT ANY POINT BEFORE 8.40AM.

- * P3-7 pupils should make their way to the school gates independently in the morning. Parents may stand beside their vehicle to ensure their child enters the school gates safely.
- * P1/2 pupils should be accompanied to the main pedestrian gate and then enter the school building independently each morning.
- * Initially, pupils will remain in their classrooms once they arrive at school in order to ensure social distancing measures are followed. This will be reviewed once the pupils are familiar with all other arrangements.
- * Staggered finishing times to avoid congestion in corridors and at gates.

2.00pm P1/2 exit from main door

3.00pm P3 exit from main door

3.00pm P4/5 exit from front of P7 classroom

3.10pm P6/7 exit from main door

PLEASE COLLECT YOUR CHILD PROMPTLY AT THE ALLOCATED TIME.

- * Unnecessary gatherings outside school when dropping your child off in the morning or collecting them in the afternoon must be avoided.
- * A distance of 2 metres from other families should be maintained at drop off and collection points.

- * Parents must remain outside the main pedestrian gates.

Face coverings may be worn to reduce potential risks.

- * **Younger pupils** should be accompanied from the main pedestrian gate when they are collected each afternoon.
- * Older pupils should be encouraged to make their way to their parents' car independently in the afternoon. Parents should stand beside their vehicle so their child can see them clearly as they leave the school premises. This also makes it easier for staff to ensure the safety of the pupils.
- * Parents must not enter the school building unless previously arranged. You are welcome to contact the school office on (028) 2073 1404 or text myself on 07892 834428 to clarify which staff member you need to speak with.
 - * There will be no Busy Bees until further notice.
- * Visuals displaying social distancing messages will be displayed at key points in main school buildings and mobile classrooms.
 - * Pupils will remain in their class "bubble" for the school day. This consistent membership ensures greater protection.
- * Interactions between **P1/2, P3**, P4/5 and P6/7 class bubbles will be avoided if at all possible.
 - * Seating arrangements will be spaced as widely as possibly in each classroom, with pupils in **P3-7** positioned with desks all facing the front.
 - * Pupils will be assigned to particular desks.
- * Non-essential furniture has been removed from all teaching spaces to maximise available room for pupils.
- * Areas of the dining hall has been clearly identified for essential group work and intervention programmes.
- * Staggered break times will allow each classroom "bubble" to enjoy outdoor play without compromising social distancing advice.
 - P1/2/3** 10.15am to 10.30am Outdoor play
 - P4/5/6/7** 10.30am to 10.45am Outdoor play
- * Milk orders will not be placed until further notice.
- * Staggered dinnertimes will allow each classroom "bubble" to enjoy outdoor play without compromising social distancing advice.

P1/2/3 12.00 noon Dinners and packed lunches in classroom
12.30pm Outdoor play
P4/5/6/7 12.30pm Dinners and packed lunches in classroom
1.00pm Outdoor play

* School playground and grass area will be clearly divided to ensure class bubbles aren't inadvertently compromised during outdoor play.

* School dinners and packed lunches will be eaten in the classrooms to avoid unnecessary movement around the school and contact between the classroom bubbles.

* Full school assemblies won't be held to avoid interaction between classroom bubbles.

* Singing activities are postponed until further notice.

* Piano lessons will continue as before, with every effort made to ensure social distancing, respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene guidance is followed. Contact the school directly if you would like your child to receive piano lessons in Term One.

* There will be no after school clubs until further notice, given the additional hygiene responsibilities currently placed on staff members.

* Pupil movement around school will be reduced to decrease the risk of spreading the virus. Pupil use of areas other than their classroom will be strictly limited.

* Encourage your child to be more independent. Developing their self-management skills will promote their confidence. It will also mean that social distancing and hygiene arrangements will not be compromised by a pupil requiring practical assistance. Particular attention should be given to the following :-

- putting on and taking off their coat

- using the toilet

- washing hands

- using a tissue

- tying shoe laces....or closing Velcro fastenings

* All visitors to school will adhere to existing social distancing, respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene protocols.

- * The Positive Behaviour Policy has been adapted to include appropriate sanctions for deliberately negative behaviours compromising social distancing guidance, given the increased level of risk to pupils and staff alike.
- * Number of staff using the staffroom and other bases, including the office, will be limited to ensure social distancing is effectively maintained.
- * Staff meetings and gatherings will take place in accordance with current social distancing rules.
- * Staff members will make every effort to stay 2m apart, and maintain distances as far as is practicable between themselves and pupils.

HYGIENE AND PHYSICAL PROTECTION

Regular and thorough attention to hygiene is essential to deter the spread of the virus. All members of the school community will be encouraged to maintain personal hygiene throughout the day.

- * Pupils should wash their hands immediately before leaving home each morning.
 - * Schoolbags should not be brought to school until further notice.
- * Medications, such as inhalers, must be clearly labelled with your child's name. These should be given to your child's teacher and will remain in school for the rest of the year or until they need to be replaced.
 - * Pupils' hands, lunchbox, water bottle and homework folder will be sanitised on their arrival in the classroom.
 - * Lunchboxes and water bottles should be clearly labelled.
 - * Coats will be kept on the backs of chairs where possible.
- * Pupils will wash their hands as soon as they arrive at school, at regular intervals during the school day, and finally just before they go home.
 - * Effective hand hygiene will be promoted throughout the school. The pupils will be encouraged to use lukewarm water and soap for 20 seconds and then use either the hand dryer or paper towels to dry their hands thoroughly.
- * Hand hygiene will be focused on when pupils enter or leave the school building, as well as before and after eating. Younger pupils will be supervised to ensure effective practice.

- * Pupils and staff will be encouraged to avoid touching their faces as this directly compromises effective hand hygiene. Children will be asked not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose.
- * "Catch it! Bin It! Kill It!" will be promoted in all classrooms. Coughs and sneezes should be caught in either the elbow or a paper tissue. The tissues should be immediately binned to avoid spreading the virus. The bins will be emptied regularly.
 - * Visuals at key points around the main school building and mobile classrooms will remind pupils of good hygiene practices.
- * Hand sanitiser will be accessible at entry and exit points of the main building, in addition to the individual classrooms, staffroom, office, ICT room and dining hall.
- * Supplies of disposable tissues will be available in each classroom, in addition to the pupils having their own supply.
 - * Where possible, pupils should wear clean uniform every day. However, this isn't essential, so please do not put yourself under undue pressure and expense.
- * Pupils will use their own stationery throughout the school day. Writing pencils, colouring pencils, a ruler, a sharpener, a rubber, a pair of scissors and a Pritt Stick should be brought into school in a pencil case on the first day. These will remain on or under each individual desk to avoid cross contamination.
 - * Homework folders will be provided by the school. These will be distributed during the first week of term. Please sanitise this on a daily basis. Wipe it down thoroughly when your child brings it home, and just before your child leaves for school in the morning.
 - * Individual pencil cases and trays will be wiped down frequently.
- * Desk surfaces, chairs, doors, handles, light switches, sinks and toilets will be cleaned and disinfected daily, with high traffic areas being sanitised at regular intervals during the school day. Routine cleaning of frequently touched objects will help to decrease risk.
- * Classes will be encouraged to visit the toilets at allocated times during the day. This will allow for the sinks and cubicles to be disinfected immediately afterwards. Additional visits for individual pupils will be permitted as necessary.

- * Pupils will be allocated their desk for the term to avoid unnecessary spread of the virus around the classroom.
- * Resources which aren't easily washable or wipe-able have generally been removed from the classrooms. Those remaining, will be used directly by the teachers during lessons and won't serve as shared resources.
- * All desks will be wiped down with disinfectant before school dinners and packed lunches are eaten each day. The same procedure will take place immediately after the food has been consumed.
- * Use of the outdoor play equipment will be prohibited until further notice, given the multiple touch points involved.
- * A cashless payment system is currently being organised, in order to avoid the handling of money within the school. This will hopefully be in place by the start of term. Details will follow. In the meantime, no money should be sent directly into school.
- * Teachers and classroom assistants will wear face shields, particularly when they are working with an individual pupil or a group.
- * PPE will be worn by staff members who are giving pupils medication or meeting intimate care needs. In such cases, face masks, disposable gloves and disposable plastic aprons will be worn.
- * PPE equipment will be kept in an allocated area in the hygiene room.
- * All staff members are aware of how to use face masks effectively. This is essential in order to reduce the risk of contamination.

Face masks :-

MUST cover both nose and mouth.

MUST be changed when they become moist and damaged.

MUST be worn once and then discarded, with hands washed immediately.

MUST NOT be allowed to dangle around the neck.

MUST NOT be touched once put on, except when removed for disposal.

- * Staff members will wear face masks when working for short periods in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible.
- * The Positive Behaviour Policy has been adapted to include appropriate sanctions for deliberately negative behaviours compromising hygiene guidance, given the increased level of risk to pupils and staff alike.

- * All staff members will bring their own crockery and cutlery for use at breaktime and dinnertime.
- * All staff members will be encouraged to bring essential items only to school.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

- * Home to school transport should only be used when there is no alternative available. Parents should seek other methods of travel if possible, including walking, cycling or use of "Park and Stride" facilities.
- * Pupils displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 should not travel to school.
- * It's strongly recommended that all pupils should wear a face covering on all buses, regardless of their age, unless the children concerned are unable to handle them as directed.
- * Pupils on all buses should try to maintain a social distance from others.
- * Pupils wearing face coverings on public transport will wash their hands immediately when they arrive at school. Temporary coverings will be disposed of in a bin, reusable ones will be placed in a plastic bag. Pupils will then wash their hands again.
- * If a pupil develops symptoms whilst at school, they will be taken home directly by their parents. They must not travel home by bus.
- * If a pupil becomes aware of COVID-19 symptoms while on board a bus, they should tell the driver or the school staff immediately upon arrival at school.
- * All pupils travelling to school by bus must clean their hands before they leave their home. They should also use the sanitiser provided on the bus when they board the vehicle.
- * Pupils on home to school transport should carry tissues to catch coughs and sneezes.
 - * Pupils shouldn't eat or drink on home to school transport.
 - * If applicable, children should sit beside their siblings or be grouped together by year group from school.
- * The Positive Behaviour Policy has been adapted to include appropriate sanctions for deliberately negative behaviours compromising transport guidance, given the increased level of risk to pupils and staff alike

SCHOOL MEALS CATERING SERVICES

- * School meals services will be provided in schools from Tuesday 1st.
- * School must be informed if your child has any allergies or special dietary requirements.
- * Staggered lunch times will help support effectiveness of class bubbles.
- * A more restricted menu will be on offer, with one meal being provided daily. Pupils won't have options to choose from, compared to previous provision. The menu for next week is as below :-
 - 8th : Mince bolognese, pasta and crusty bread
Date Krispie
 - 9th : Oven baked steak burger, bap, sweetcorn and sliced potatoes
Shortbread biscuit and jelly pot
 - 10th : Oven baked fish fingers, beans and mashed potatoes
Fruit muffin
 - 11th : Roast chicken, stuffing, gravy, carrots, mashed & roast potatoes
Ice-cream tub
 - 12th : Oven baked chicken nuggets, garden peas and chips
Yoghurt and slice of melon
- * School meals will be served in disposable boxes. These will be disposed of immediately after the pupils are finished eating. Bottled water will be available.
 - * The Breakfast Club will not be in operation until further notice.
- * No breaks will be available until further notice. Provision options will be reviewed once the pupils are familiar with all other arrangements.
- * The dining hall has been repurposed for use with groups of pupils in clearly demarcated zones, although this will be avoided when possible.
- * The Positive Behaviour Policy has been adapted to include appropriate sanctions for deliberately negative behaviours compromising school meals guidance, given the increased level of risk to pupils and staff alike.

CURRICULUM DELIVERY

- * Priority of school community will be to minimise lockdown learning gaps as soon as possible.
 - * Literacy and Numeracy will be the priority curricular areas.

- * Pastoral support will address the range of emotions pupils will experience on their return to school. These may well include anxiety, fear and anger as well as excitement, happiness and relief.
- * PDMU curricular experiences will be used throughout the school to address mental health and well-being.
- * There will be no Schools' Swimming Programme until further notice.
- * Supplementary assessments will be undertaken in each classroom where applicable, to provide a realistic baseline for targeted curriculum provision for the remainder of the school year.
- * The homework schedule will continue as before.
- * Full homework will be set for those P7 pupils currently preparing for AQE assessments. Every effort will be made to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
- * Reading books will be sent home as this is the most effective way for you to develop your child's comprehension and reading skills. Books will be wiped down with sanitiser before being placed in your child's homework folder. They will be wiped down on their return and placed in quarantine before being put back into bookcases or passed to another pupil in the classroom.
- * Opportunities for practical learning will be introduced as pupils become familiar with social distancing and hand hygiene arrangements.
- * Provision will be regularly reviewed to ensure pupils have opportunities to access as broad a curriculum as possible in a safe and secure manner, taking all recent advice and guidance into practical account.

PUPIL ATTENDANCE

- * Pupils **who are clinically vulnerable**, should attend school. These children have pre-existing conditions. Further guidance and information is available from NI Direct and PHA.
- * Pupils who live with someone **who is clinically vulnerable**, should attend school.
- * Pupils **who have previously shielded**, should follow guidance from their hospital consultant or GP if in doubt about school attendance. These children are clinically extremely vulnerable and will require additional measures to keep them safe.

* Pupils who live with someone who had previously been shielding, will have an individual risk assessment conducted before the most appropriate place of care is determined. They should only attend school if they are able to stringently adhere to social distancing.

* Evidence of an underlying medical condition, as well as evidence of learning at home will be required for clinically vulnerable pupils who continue to learn from home. Attendance will be recorded as unauthorised in the absence of evidence.

ON-SITE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

* It is vital that the data held in school in relation to your child is up to date. School should immediately be made aware of any changes regarding contact numbers of parents or guardians. Should your child suddenly become unwell in school, we will need to be able to contact you directly and quickly. Please return all calls from school just in case.

* All staff members are aware of COVID-19 symptoms and have been given clear advice if symptoms become apparent while on site.

* Take your child's temperature daily in order to be vigilant about signs and symptoms of the virus.

* Access the following website for the most relevant updates.
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

* All pupils are expected to follow the requirements of the "Test, Trace and Protect" programme. This has been implemented by the Department of Health in an effort to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Expectations include self-isolation if they are identified as close contacts of cases and obtaining a test for the COVID-19 if they develop symptoms.

* Pupils who become unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature (fever) or anosmia (a loss or a change in your normal sense of smell, which can also affect the sense of taste), will be sent home. Any members of their household at the school will also be sent home. The family will be advised to follow the PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.

A full record of all actions will be kept.

* Pupils waiting to be collected will be moved to the hygiene room where they will be isolated behind a closed door.

- * Adult supervision will be provided. A window will be opened for ventilation. The process will be fully documented.
 - * If the pupil needs to go to the bathroom while they are waiting to be collected, they will use a separate bathroom if possible. The area will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by anyone else.
 - * PPE will be worn by staff caring for the pupil while they await collection, if direct personal care is needed and a distance of 2m cannot be maintained.
 - * 999 will be called if the child is seriously ill, injured or their life is at risk.
 - * Members of staff who have helped someone displaying symptoms, won't go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. Instead, they will wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds. The affected area will then be fully disinfected to reduce the risk of further infection.
 - * Pupils and staff with symptoms should not attend school. Symptomatic staff are expected to follow the advice outlined by the Test and Trace and Protect strategy and obtain a test for COVID-19.
 - * Caution will be applied even when staff or pupils have a negative test result. If all members of their household test negative, the pupil or member of staff may return to school providing they are well enough and haven't had a fever for 48 hours.
 - * The Contact Tracing Service will contact those with positive test results to request information regarding recent interactions. All household members should then follow PHA isolation guidance which currently requires everyone in the house to stay at home. Isolation guidance will then be provided. This may result in friendship groups, regular contacts and an entire class or 'bubble' being instructed to self-isolate at home.
 - * The guidance should be followed by both pupils and staff and their households :-
- If you have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test, you will need to stay at home for at least 10 days.
 - If you live with someone who has symptoms or a positive test, you will need to stay at home for 10 days from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms.

- **If you develop symptoms during this 10-day period**, you will need to self-check in accordance with Test and Trace guidance and stay at home for 10 days from the day your symptoms started, regardless of what day you are on in the original 10-day period.
- 10 days after your symptoms started, **if you do not have a high temperature**, you do not need to continue to self-isolate.
- 10 days after your symptoms started, **if you still have a high temperature**, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal.
- You do not need to self-isolate **if you just have a cough after 10 days**, as a cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
- **If you have symptoms and live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system**, find somewhere else they can stay for the 10-day isolation period.

* People living within a household will likely infect each other or be infected already. Pupils and staff members staying at home for 10 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the households could pass on to others in the community.

* Staff or pupils who have been members of the same "protective bubble" as someone who has/develops symptoms and/or tests positive for COVID-19, must follow PHA isolation guidance under the Test, Trace and Protect programme. All other contacts in the same "protective bubble" as the person with symptoms or who tests positive will have to isolate for the required 10 day isolation period. They can return to school after the required 10 day period.

* Enhanced cleaning will be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed COVID-19 has been.

* Pupils or members of staff can return to school when they have completed the necessary period of isolation as advised by the Test, Trace and Protect service.

QUICK GUIDE TO CORONAVIRUS ABSENCES

ACTION NEEDED.....	ACTION NEEDED	RETURN TO SCHOOL WHEN.....
<p><i>My child has coronavirus symptoms.....</i></p>	<p>DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL.</p> <p>Contact school daily.</p> <p>Self-isolate.</p> <p>Get a test.</p> <p>Inform school immediately about test result.</p>	<p>The test comes back negative and they are fever free for 48 hours.</p>
<p><i>My child tests positive for coronavirus.....</i></p>	<p>DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL.</p> <p>Inform the school immediately about the test result.</p> <p>Contact school daily.</p> <p>Self-isolate for at least 10 days.</p>	<p>They can return to school after 10 days even if they have a cough or loss of taste or smell/taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks once infection is gone.</p> <p>If they continue to have a high temperature they should stay at home.</p>
<p><i>Somebody in my household has coronavirus symptoms</i></p>	<p>DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL for 14 days.</p> <p>Contact school daily.</p> <p>Household member to get a test</p> <p>Inform the school immediately about the test result</p>	<p>Stay at home for 10 days after the first person in your home started having symptoms.</p>

<p><i>Somebody in my household has tested positive with coronavirus</i></p>	<p>DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL.</p> <p>Inform the school immediately about the test result.</p> <p>Contact school daily</p>	<p>The child has completed 10 days of self-isolation.</p>
<p><i>The Track and Trace scheme has identified my child as a close contact of somebody with symptoms of confirmed coronavirus.....</i></p>	<p>Self-isolate for 10 days.</p> <p>Contact school daily.</p>	<p>The child has completed 10 days of self-isolation.</p>
<p><i>My child has travelled abroad and has to self-isolate as part of the quarantine process.....</i></p>	<p>Returning from a destination where quarantine is needed.....</p> <p>DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL.</p> <p>Contact school daily.</p> <p>Self-isolate for 10 days.</p> <p>Provide information to the school as per attendance policy.</p>	<p>When the quarantine period of 10 days has been completed</p>
<p><i>Staff or pupils in my child's bubble have tested positive.....</i></p>	<p>DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL.</p> <p>Inform the school.</p> <p>Everyone in the bubble must self-isolate and take a test.</p>	<p>When a negative test is confirmed or the necessary isolation period has been completed.</p>

Every member of the school community has a vital role to play in the re-opening of Ballytober. Please follow social distancing, respiratory and hygiene guidance as stringently and consistently as possible. All the best laid plans in school will be severely compromised if similar procedures are not followed by pupils, staff and parents beyond the school building. We all have a duty of care to each other and need to work as a team to ensure pupils continue their education in a safe and healthy environment without any further distractions or interruptions. Your co-operation and attention to detail is greatly appreciated.

Elaine Anderson
Principal