

St Patrick's Primary School

13 Castlewellan Road, Ballymaghera, Hilltown, BT34 5UY

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Progress Through Partnership

27th August 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and children,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you back to school for the 2021-2022 academic year. I hope you all had a wonderful summer break. I am delighted to have been appointed Principal of St Patrick's PS, Hilltown, and feel privileged to have been chosen to be continuing to build upon the excellent practice already embedded in the day to day running of St Patrick's, which has been well established by the previous principal, Miss Lawless and her predecessors. I look forward to getting to know you and your children and working in partnership with you.

Although we are faced with another challenging year, I wish to reassure you all the staff in St Patrick's will be doing everything we can to ensure your children receive the highest standard of a nurturing, broad, balanced education in an inclusive, safe environment.

Having considered the most current COVID-19 Guidance to Educational Settings issued by DENI, we have decided on the following procedures. These will be reviewed at the end of each month and you will be informed of any changes needing to be implemented.

As previously, please do not send pupils to school if they have any of the COVID-19 symptoms such as a persistent cough, high temperature, loss of sense of smell/taste or any "flu" like symptoms.

Please read the following instructions carefully and discuss these with your child/children to ensure they are feeling happy and confident about returning to school on the 31st of August.

School will restart for P2-7 pupils on Tuesday 31st August and classes will remain in Protective Bubbles of two rooms, with appropriate social distancing. P1 parents should adhere to your child's individual start date sent to you in June.

Protective Bubbles	Teachers
Room 1 and Room 2	P1 Mrs Kate Austin, P1/2 Miss Maeve McNeil
Room 3 and Room 5	P2 Mrs Orla Reavey , P3 Mrs Sinead O'Neill
Room 4 and Room 7	P3/4 Mrs Sinead O'Hare, P4 Mrs Kitty Fegan
Room 6 and Room 10	P5 Mr Nigel Trainor , P5 Mrs Ursula Kearney /Mr Stephen McConville
Room 8 and Room 9	P6 Miss Catherine Murphy, P6 Mr Shay Flannagan
Room 11 and Room 12	P7 Miss Lisa McAnulty, P7 Mr Plunkett McConville

Arrival Time: The buzzer gate will open at 8.40am. Pupils, except bus pupils, enter school through the buzzer gate (**All other gates will be locked**). The morning drop-off will be closely monitored for the first few weeks to ensure safety in the carpark. If it is deemed to be too busy at any time new arrangements will be put in place. Please adhere to social distancing. P1 parents leaving their children to their door in the first few weeks should wear a mask whilst on school grounds.

There will be three members of staff on duty from 8.40am – one at the first gate by the church car-park (Mrs Smith), one at the buzzer gate, and one at the lay-by to meet the school bus and escort bus children through the Parochial Hall gate.

Two-way directional System: The essential rule is walk on the LEFT. When pupils come through the gate at the church carpark into the grounds of the Parochial House there will be a two-way system laid out for everyone to follow. No parents will be permitted to go through the buzzer gate (with exceptions for P1 pupils and parents until 17th September 2021)

Your child's class teacher will be waiting for them for the first week in the yard to ensure all children know how to get to their new classroom. Please remind your child who their new teacher is. There will be multiple school entry points for the various classes to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19.

School Bus: when the bus arrives, the caretaker, Mr Downey, will unlock the Parochial Hall gate to supervise bus pupils coming off the bus and in through the Parochial Hall gate. Then the Parochial Hall gate will be locked.

Please **DO NOT** attempt to park or turn your vehicle in the lay-by or along the front of the school. This area must be kept free of all traffic to ensure our children's safety. The lower church carpark should be used for parents/carers to drop children off and pick children up.

On entry to school, pupils shall proceed to their own classroom, wash their hands, and go straight to their desk.

Handwashing and sanitising sessions have been timetabled at regular intervals throughout the school day. Please ensure your children wash their hands before they come to school each morning.

Teaching starts at 9.00am. It is extremely important all children are in school for 9am. Class registration will be marked first thing. Please note, attendance is affected when a child is entered as arriving late.

There will be two breaktimes and two lunchtimes

Classes	Breaktime	Lunchtime
P1 - P4	10.30 – 10.45 a.m.	12.00-12.40p.m.
P5 – P7	10.50 – 11.05 a.m.	12.30-1.10p.m.

Dinners will be served in the Assembly Hall and lunches will be eaten in the Parochial Hall. Tables will be cleaned between each of the sittings. Each bubble will have their own designated area in each hall with appropriate social distancing between them and their own designated playground with a time span between turnarounds.

Dinner Menu - There will be only one choice. The dinner menu is on the website. Remember that we are a NUT-FREE school.

Dinner Money - School dinners cost £2.60 per day. Dinner money for the week **MUST** be sent in on **the first day** of the week.

Money must be in an envelope, clearly labelled with the child's name, class, and days they are taking dinner and the amount of money clearly written. Please note NO CHANGE WILL BE GIVEN. If there is extra money in the envelope it will be given to Trocaire as a donation. If you choose to pay by cheque, please add 25p to the overall amount as the bank charges the school 25p to process each cheque. Teachers will not count any money but will send all money to Mrs Brown in the Office.

Please send in **separate money envelopes for each pupil** as we can no longer accept money on a family basis. We know that we can count on your full co-operation in this matter.

Free School Meals

If you are entitled to free school meals, please make sure you apply. If you have applied and have not had eligibility confirmed by EANI please phone Mrs Brown in our office and let her know.

Home-time Arrangements

P1 – P3 : 1.50pm on Monday-Thursday

Parents/carers should park in church carpark and use the two-way system, walking past Parochial House and into school grounds to collect their child. ONLY the Buzzer gate will be open. Please be courteous to all users. All pupils in P1 -P3 **MUST** be collected from their teacher or classroom assistant at the class line in the playground at home time. Please be patient as it is busy and staff will dismiss your children as promptly as possible. Children can only go to their parent/carer when staff gives them permission to do so.

P4 - P7 : 3pm on Monday to Thursday

All pupils in P.4 – P.7 must fill in the Home-time Permission Slip and return it to their teacher who will then have a list of those pupils who have permission to 1. WALK home 2. WALK to the church car-park to be collected by car 3. Travel by bus. 4. Be collected from playground.

On arrival at the church car-park if a pupil cannot see their parent or car they wait on the footpath beside the gate to the Parochial House.

For the safety of all, we remind you that it is never permissible to stop or wait in a YELLOW BOX on any road surface. There is a yellow box at the top of the church carpark. Please be alert to this and adhere to the one-way system on entering and exiting the church carpark.

Fridays - staggered home-times on Friday.

- **P1 – P3** and their older siblings will go home at **1.30pm**
- **P4 - P5** and their older siblings will go home at **1.40pm**
- **P6 and P7** will go home at **1.50pm**

This will be reviewed at Christmas.

Whilst on the school premises, please follow the Public Health Authority guidance on social distancing from others where practicable and wear a mask.

General points

- To ensure our school community is kept safe we request that no parents/guardians enter the building during drop off or collection times. Please note that communication with class teachers can be facilitated by phone calls through the school office.
- **Homework:** will begin again during the week beginning Monday September 13th. There is no longer a requirement for the quarantine of books and materials used at home and in school. Homework will be completed in an exercise book (P4 – P7) or folder (P1 – P3) and will be corrected in class by the teacher as it was in previous years. Teachers will explain the processes involved in this with their class when homework starts in September.
- **School bag:** Pupils will bring a school bag to school each day.
- **Lunchbox:** Pupils will bring a lunchbox to school each day if they are taking lunch.
- **Water:** there will still be no sharing of water fountains so pupils will bring their own bottle of water to school each day.
- **Toilets:** Each class will be allocated designated toilets.
- **Hygiene: NO** wipes or sanitisers are brought to school by pupils. Pupils are encouraged to bring a packet of tissues to catch sneezes or coughs.
- **Pencil Cases:** only pupils in P5, P6 and P7 will bring pencil cases. These should contain 2 pencils, 2 pens, a rubber, a sharpener, a small ruler and a small set of colouring pencils. Pupils in P1 – P4 will be provided with all the writing/drawing/colouring equipment they need in the classroom and should keep their personal writing equipment at home.
- **Handwashing routines** have been scheduled throughout the day and we will continue to promote the practices of “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it,” and safe coughing.
- **After school activities** and clubs will resume as soon as possible.
- Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 during the day will be looked after in the medical room until arrangements can be made for going home. For advice on what to do if your child has been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please visit <http://pha.site/cvtesting> or phone 111.
- We will continue to use our school website and messaging service to keep you informed as things progress throughout the school year.

All School forms will be sent home on Tuesday. Please read them carefully, complete as appropriate and return by Thursday 2nd September 2021.

I know you will understand and appreciate the continued use of the systems we are implementing are designed to ensure a safe return to school for everyone. We would greatly appreciate your full co-operation with these routines so that we can operate as normally as possible in these challenging times and we look forward to better days in the not too distant future.

In the meantime, keep safe and well.

Yours faithfully,

Geraldine Smith