

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

I am writing today to give you the first of many updates that will keep you fully up to date on our plans for the reopening of Ballydesmond NS.

Firstly, I would like to reiterate that all measures we will be implementing are with the overarching aim of returning as safely as possible in exactly three weeks time. Some of these measures are not ones we want to implement, but ones the Board of Management have decided must be implemented.

- In the coming weeks we will send out information and instructional videos that will detail all the modifications we are making to school life following consultation with the Parents' Council and the Board of Management. These will include:
  - New drop off/pick up arrangements
  - Installation of hand sanitisers throughout the building
  - New cleaning procedures
  - Classroom layouts
  - Provision for pupil wellbeing
  - Priorities for children's learning
  - Guidance around protocols for sick children/suspected Covid cases
- The department guidance for Junior Infants to 2nd class is that social distancing is not a prerequisite to reopening. In 3rd to 6th class, the guidance is that each bubble (classroom) be divided into pods (groups) that are a minimum of 1 metre apart from each other. It is then recommended that there be 1m distancing within this pod between pupils where possible.
- 5th and 6th class: The Board of Management have considered at length what the safest option is to safely allow for the return of these 32 children for full time education. In light of this, the decision has been taken to move this class to the Community Centre. There is no classroom in the school building that can accommodate this class while also adhering fully to the department advice around social distancing. We must do everything in our power to keep our pupils safe. We have received a grant to make sure this space is welcoming and inviting for the children, enabling us to provide:
  - A state of the art mobile interactive whiteboard
  - Internet access
  - Appropriate furniture including storage for belongings
  - Appropriate hygiene practices and toilet facilities
- Mrs. Cronin will be moving to the hall to teach 5th and 6th class with Mr. Neenan moving to 3rd and 4th class. All additional teaching and SNA supports that would have been given to this class in normal circumstances will continue to be provided.

- There is no guidance given about uniforms in the roadmap for reopening schools. What we ask in Ballydesmond NS is that the PE uniform is worn on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the regular uniform should then be worn on Tuesday and Thursday. We also ask that the uniform is not worn for extended periods after school.
- The school staff and board are working tirelessly to continue to put a comprehensive plan in place and we will be in contact again next week with more details to ensure both parents and pupils are prepared for our return to school.

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Mr. Neenan