



Returning to School

Information for Parents for September 2021



What's happening?

School will be a bit different this year, especially at the beginning, but the children will get used to it very quickly. Explain to your child that things will be a bit different, but try not to let them sense your worry as they may pick up on your stress. We teachers are enthusiastic and will do our utmost to ensure a happy and safe return.

We have been busy preparing the school and the updating policies and procedures in line with Government Guidelines and Public Health advice. Check that the school has your correct contact details. Please let us know if you have moved house, changed phone number or email address. You may also want to check that your emergency contact details are up to date.

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What You Can Do to Prepare

- Practice washing hands properly, with soap, for 20 seconds. Make sure that your child also knows how to dry their hands thoroughly.
- Children should also know how to use hand-sanitizer correctly, and that it should not be ingested.
- Teach your child correct cough and sneeze etiquette. Cough or sneeze into a tissue, or into your elbow if you do not have a tissue. Put the tissue in the bin and wash or sanitize your hands.
- Make sure that your child can **INDEPENDENTLY** open and close their lunchbox and bottle, their coat, and their shoes. Shoes with laces are not recommended for younger children.

Drop-off and Collection

- Gate opens at 8:30. School starts at 8:50.
- Schools must “limit interaction on arrival and departure from school.”
- Children will walk unaccompanied from the school gate straight to their classroom. Children will enter and exit school directly through the external classroom door. Main school door will not be used by children.
- Remind pupils to maintain their distance from non-family members when walking into class.
- School Transport Scheme services will run as normal. Children will sit in pre-assigned seats. Primary-aged children are not required to wear face masks.
- For the first two weeks Junior Infants will finish at 12 noon.
- Senior infants will finish at 1:30 p.m.
- 1st to 6th class will finish at 2:30 p.m.

Cleaning

- Cleaning in schools has been increased considerably.
- Each classroom is cleaned daily.
- Resources are provided for children individually where possible, or shared with their ‘pod’. Resources that are shared between classes will be cleaned between use.
- Books, toys and resources will be cleaned regularly or quarantined for 72 hours before being reused.



Physical Distancing

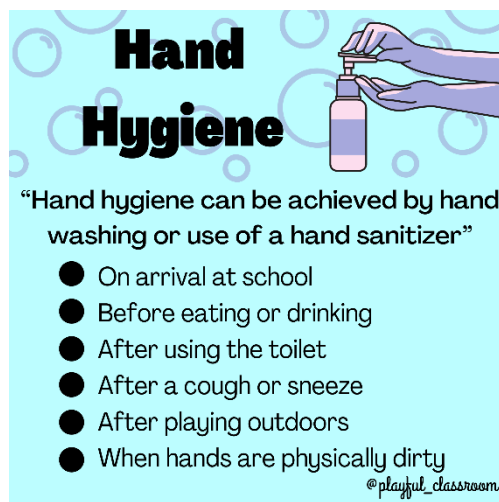
- Each classroom will be a 'Bubble'. Contact between bubbles will be extremely limited and break times are staggered.
- Classes will be divided into groups, or 'Pods'. These children will sit, work and play together. They will stay in the same pod for a number of weeks.
- Staff will maintain physical distance from children when they can, and will wear mask full time when inside.

A 'bubble' is a class. So in the middle room there is 3 bubbles, 1st class, 2nd class and 3rd class.
A 'pod' is a 'bubble' / class divided into smaller group.

Break & Lunch

- Break and lunch time will be staggered per classroom to maintain physical distancing.
- Each class (Bubble) will play on their own in their designated area in the yard.
- Teachers will supervise their own classes.

Hand Hygiene



- Children will perform hand hygiene regularly during the school day:
 - on arrival at school
 - before eating or drinking
 - after using the toilet



- after a cough or sneeze
- after playing outdoors
- when hands are physically dirty
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are installed throughout the school.
- Children are not required to supply hand sanitizer or any other hand hygiene products.
- Please inform the school if there is any reason why your child may not be able to use hand sanitizer.

Schoolbags and Lunches

- Ensure your child does not have unnecessary items such as toys in their schoolbag.
- Choose lunchboxes, bottles and pencil cases that are easy to clean, as they will need to be cleaned frequently.
- It is important that your child has all the stationery that they need as they will not be able to share with their classmates.

Clothing

- The children will wear their full uniform on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday and Thursday they will wear their school tracksuit.
- Outdoor play and physical education will be a big part of the curriculum on the return to school. Please ensure that children have a waterproof coat and suitable footwear as they will be going outside every day.

Communication with Teachers

- Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building.
- Appointments may be made to visit the school, for essential purposes, by contacting Catherine (secretary) in advance. A contact tracing log will need to be filled out for each visit.
- This does not mean that you will be unable to communicate with your child's teacher. You can communicate with them via the traditional methods such as homework diary, email, Seesaw, etc.



Starting Junior Infants

- Unfortunately, parents will not be permitted to enter the school with their child on the first day of school (or on subsequent days).
- Rest assured, the Junior Infant teachers and other school staff will do their best to make sure that every feels happy and safe at school.
- The benefits of play are well-documented, and infant teachers are very aware of this. Lots of time will be spent playing and listening to stories. The number one priority for the first few months of school will be the children's well-being.

Children with Additional Needs

- The Special Education Team will make sure that your child's needs are catered for to the best of their ability.
- If you have concerns or questions, please email the school within the next week. Doing it now rather than in the first week back will give us a better chance to respond and prepare where necessary.

Very high-risk Pupils

Pupils at high risk may not be able to return to school. These pupils will receive appropriate support to engage with learning. Ongoing connection with the classmates and school community will be ensured.

The list of people in very high risk groups includes people who:

- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs



- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)

Suspected Cases of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Loss of smell or taste, or distortion of taste
- Sore throat
- Headaches
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Children **MUST NOT ATTEND** school if they are unwell or if any members of their household are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.
- If any pupil becomes unwell while at school, they will be brought to an isolation room and given a mask to wear. Parents will be contacted to collect the child as soon as possible.
- The HSE will inform any parents of children who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case.

Absence from School

A Parent Declaration must be completed for **EVERY ABSENCE**. The link to this form is <https://www.lankillns.ie/about-3>

It is everyone's responsibility to keep each other safe by practising good practice and following all advice / guidelines.