



# St. Mary's Primary School

20 Cloughcor Road, Ballymagorry, Strabane, Co. Tyrone. BT82 0BE.

Telephone No: 028 7184 1237

Principal: Mrs A Devine

9<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## **SCHOOL RE-OPENING - FURTHER DETAILS**

Dear Parent/ Person with parental responsibility,

Welcome back!!!

I am absolutely delighted and so very proud of all our pupils on their return to Cloughcor. It is so lovely having our pupils back on site and it is great to see their happy, smiling faces.

I would like to especially welcome our new Primary One pupils and extend my sincere thanks to Donna, Ciara and to Sarcha for all the hard work they did last year in our Pre School Centre in getting our pupils ready for their big P1 adventure! I know that they will settle well into P1 as they are now in the fabulous hands of Ms Coyle, assisted by Patricia.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you for your patience and for your understanding as I know how difficult it is not being able to come and go as you once did when leaving your child/children to school and when collecting your child/children at home-time. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you for adhering to the steps we have put in place and for not gathering at the school gates at home time.

I hope you can appreciate that as a school we all have a role to play in working together to try to keep the pupils you have entrusted in our care as safe as we possibly can in the current climate we are living in.

I hope you have had an opportunity to read our recent school newsletter dated 18/8/20 which dealt with many of the key issues regarding a safe return to school for all our pupils. The purpose of this newsletter is to add to the previous guidance and details relating to our return to school.

### **SCHOOL TRANSPORT:**

Many of our pupils use a dedicated school transport, either EA buses or Translink, and these services will continue as before.

Whilst the wearing of face coverings for pupils under 13 is not mandatory the Dept. of Education strongly recommend that all pupils using school buses do so in cases when it is deemed to be appropriate. Issues to consider include the age of the pupil or medical issues that could make wearing a mask distressing.

Pupils arriving and leaving the school by bus will be directed to and from buses by staff in order to minimise contact between pupils in different classes.

Pupils travelling home will be seated in class groups in order to minimise unnecessary contact between class groups.

The following is a list of Dos and DON'Ts issued by the EA that pupils can use to help keep themselves and other passengers safe.

#### **DO:**

Wash hands before using transport.

Use hand sanitiser when available.

Wear a face covering if you can do so safely.

Catch it- bin it- kill it! Carry tissues, cover coughs and sneezes,

Leave space between other users when queueing, getting on and getting off the bus.

Stay back from the driver.

Remove all belongings and dispose of any rubbish safely.

### **DON'T:**

Don't travel or attend school if you are displaying Covid-19 symptoms or are part of a family advised to self-isolate.

Don't share personal items.

Don't eat or drink on board – unless for medical reasons.

**Try to follow these rules as strictly as possible.**

### **COMMUNICATION:**

It is vital that we have your up-to-date contact details in order that you receive all text messages and can be contacted immediately if your child needs to be sent home. If you have changed phone number recently but have not informed the school, please ring the office and leave your new details with Miriam.

### **MEDICAL/ DIETARY NEEDS:**

If your child has any medical or dietary needs that we are unaware of, please contact the school so that we can keep your child safe whilst at school.

### **DINNER MONEY:**

Pupils taking dinner money should bring the payments for these in a plastic money bag or sealed envelope. These should contain the **EXACT** payment as change cannot be given and should have the details clearly written on the envelope/money bag.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

The revised guidance for the re-opening of schools states that attendance is mandatory and that from August 1, 2020, "shielding" has been paused. Please follow advice of the hospital or GP. If a pupil lives in a household where members were considered extremely clinically vulnerable (at high risk of severe illness and require shielding), then an individual risk assessment should be completed. If you believe that your child is in this category, please contact the School Office.

### **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

It was advised in the Northern Ireland Re-Opening Schools Guidance, New School Day that "while coronavirus can land on fabrics and remain for some time, children where possible, should be encouraged to wear clean uniforms each day." In order to give you the opportunity to keep uniforms fresh and clean we have agreed to make every Wednesday a non- uniform day. Pupils may wear **tracksuits** every Wednesday to school so that you can get uniforms washed and dried for a Thursday morning. School P.E gear/sportswear can be worn to school **EVERY WEDNESDAY from Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September for ALL pupils in P1-P7.** Thank you!

### **DROP OFF ARRANGEMENTS**

Sincere thanks for your patience when dropping and when collecting your child/children from school daily. Pupils can be dropped off between 8.45-9.05am every morning. We have staggered home times for our P3, P4, P5, P6, P7 pupils.

P.3 and P4 pupils can be collected from the school gate at 2.50pm. P5 and P6 pupils can be collected from 2.55pm and P.7 pupils finish at 3pm. P1 and P2 finish at 2pm as usual. Pupils from P3-P7 using the Translink bus will remain on site until 3pm as usual and the bus will leave our school shortly after 3pm to be at the designated drop off locations at the usual times. Translink Bus times are as follows:

#### **Strabane to St Mary's PS Cloughcor**

Curlyhill Road (Glen Road) 08:40

Dock Street Bus Shelter 08:50

Strabane, Glenside 08:55

St Mary's PS Cloughcor 09:05

#### **St Mary's PS Cloughcor to Strabane**

St Mary's PS, Cloughcor 14:05 15:05

Ballymagorry 14:10 15:10

Strabane, Glenside 14:15 15:15

Strabane Academy Gate 14:17 15:17

NW Regional College 14:18 15:18

Dock Street Bus Shelter 14:20 15:20

Curlyhill Road (Glen Road) 14:25 15:25

## **COVID 19 symptoms**

We are learning more about COVID-19 every day. **Testing is only available for individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19** or have been advised by the Public Health Agency Contact Tracing Service to have a test.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- A new, continuous cough- this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if your child usually has a cough, it may be worse than usual); **or**
- A high temperature/fever- this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back- a temperature of 37.8 or above
- A loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

If an individual **does not have these** specific symptoms, **they do not require a test**. We have been informed by the Education Restart- New School Day guidance that pupils/parents should only book a COVID-19 test only if they have one or more of the symptoms above.

We are aware that at this time of year, it is common for colds, sore throats and viral infections to circulate. In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education. In other cases, for instance where they have a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover.

We have been advised that if a pupil **DOES NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS** of COVID-19 but has other cold-like symptoms, they do not need to be tested and do not need to self-isolate. **The individual can attend school but only if fit to do so.**

Additionally, where a pupil displays gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not attend school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days-48 hours. If your child develops a temperature after the 48hours of sickness, he/she should not attend school and further advice is to be sought from your G.P.

**Where an individual has COVID-19 symptoms and they refuse to book a test, they should not return to school for 14 days.**

## **What happens if your child is late in the morning or if they have left dinner money/lunch/snack at home by mistake?**

As you are aware pupils have specific entrance points to access their classroom(s). If however, you are unavoidably delayed, please telephone the school on 02871 841 237 and you will be informed as to when your child can enter the school. We need to know if your child is late so that we can amend the Class Register. Pupils who are late must not simply enter the school through a different door with another class. Likewise, if your child has forgotten his/her lunch and if you wish to leave it out to school, please phone the School Office and a member of staff will collect dinner/snack or dinner money from you.

## **How will children socially distance?**

I'm sure you understand that although we will try to encourage social distancing in school, it will be next to impossible to maintain this in many of our younger classes. Each class will therefore be treated as a "protective bubble" and will operate independently of any other class. Pupils will not mix together at break or lunchtime.

## **Will there be school meals?**

School dinners will be made available from Helen. Please ensure you have completed your Free School Meal Application Form if your child is to receive Free School Meals. School dinners cost £2.60 a day for those pupils looking to pay for their dinner. Dinner money should be put in a sealed envelope or money bag, clearly marked. **NO CHANGE WILL BE GIVEN, EXACT AMOUNT PLEASE.**

### **Do pupils need school bags?**

No school bags will be required initially. I am hopeful that we will get more guidance on the transfer of items to and from home to school in the next few weeks- I can but live in hope that some guidance is provided soon by DE!! Break time snacks, lunch boxes for lunch should be put in a plastic or disposable bag. Please ensure boxes/bottles are clearly labelled.

### **Do pupils need hand sanitiser?**

I had hand sanitiser stations set up on entry to all mobile classrooms Mid -August. Stations were erected in the outside toilet block, on entry to our Main school building and at the P1 and P2/P3 entrances. Liquid soap has been provided in all toilet areas and we have also provided liquid soap at the sinks in all classrooms. Pupils are engaging in a rigorous hand washing/sanitising regime daily.

### **Will there be Extra- Curricular Activities, Music Tuition/ Swimming, Coaching?**

Unfortunately, we will be unable to organise extra –curricular activities until further notice. Initially there will be no music tuition in the school. Hopefully these will be introduced into school life once social distancing routines have been thoroughly discussed and established.

### **Will school staff be wearing face masks or PPE?**

I have provided all staff with masks, visors and other PPE equipment. I have recommended that staff wear PPE when dealing with a child who has fallen, taken ill or requires some form of intimate care. Some members of staff may choose to wear face coverings at other times during face-to- face meetings or when social distancing is difficult to maintain.

### **What happens if my child is ill?**

Please follow the guidelines listed above in relation to COVID-19 symptoms.

We would ask that you do not send your child to school if they are feeling unwell. If your child presents with any sickness during the school day we will make contact with you and ask that you phone the school on your arrival to collect your child and we will bring your son/daughter to you.

If your child **shows** any symptoms of COVID-19, your child should be tested and the school must be kept informed. If your child is ill or absent from school for any reason, please inform our secretary. The reason for your child's absence also needs to be stated as we have to supply the Department of Education with statistical information for pupil attendance each day.

### **Sacrament of Reconciliation and Sacrament of the Eucharist**

Fr Sweeney will come to our school on to hear the First Confession of our current Primary 5 pupils on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September**. This will take place in school and due to the current pandemic parents will not be allowed to be present. I would ask that you please revise the format of First Confession with your son/daughter. Thank you!

The Sacrament of the Eucharist will be celebrated on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September @11am** in the Sacred Heart Chapel, Derry Road. More details will follow as to numbers permitted to attend.

### **Nut Allergies**

We have some pupils with **SEVERE** nut allergies. We would request that you do not send **ANY** foods **containing nuts** to school e.g. Nutella, peanut butter sandwiches, any type of nuts, snickers, tracker bars etc. Please refrain from sending foods **containing traces of nuts**. We would appreciate your support on this matter.

### **SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES 2020-2021**

**Autumn Term Begins-** 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**School Development Day-** Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September. Pupils are off on this day. School Staff will be in school ONLY

**Halloween Break-** Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October- Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October (inclusive)

**Christmas Holidays-** School will finish at Noon on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December,  
Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December -5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. (inclusive)

**Spring Term Starts-** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Mid-Term Break-** Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February- Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February (inclusive)

**St Patrick's Day-** Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Easter Holidays-** School will finish at Noon on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April- 9<sup>th</sup> April (inclusive)

**Summer Term Starts-** Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**May Break-** Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May- Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May (inclusive)

**Bank Holiday** – 31<sup>st</sup> May Pupils Off but school is **OPEN** for School Staff

**Summer Holidays-** School will finish at 12 Noon on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### **School Development Days**

These are days when teachers and non -teaching staff are involved in Curriculum Development Work. **NO SCHOOL FOR PUPILS**

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021

We are all so very excited to have our pupils back at Cloughcor and we hope they will all settle back in to their school routine. As a parent, I can fully appreciate any fears you might have at present especially in the current climate. It will take time for our pupils to get to know their teachers and vice versa! I encourage you to be patient.

Please note, if you have any other questions or concerns you can phone the school and I'll do my very best to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



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**Mrs Andrea Devine**  
**SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

