Principal: Mrs. Darina Scally. Deputy Principal: Mrs. Mary Daly

Dear Parents

I know you are all waiting patiently for word on how we are planning our safe return to school on September 1st. Firstly we are all looking forward to getting back into school as I’m sure the girls are too. Following an extremely busy few weeks, we have finalised our preparations for returning to school.

I would ask all parents to turn on notifications for your **Class Dojo app** at this stage. If you have any questions after reading this information, you can send them to me on Class Dojo – everybody will be able to view your question (many may have the same question) and I will do my best to answer them.

For our new Junior Infant parents who do not have access to Class Dojo yet, please email any questions you may have to principal@stjosephsclon.com we will be creating a video for our new Junior Infants to explain exactly what will happen on your first week in school and we hope this will be very helpful.

The success of our safe return to school will largely depend on the co-operation between parents and staff in the coming weeks. We will need parents to be extra vigilant about their child’s health. If your child is displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 in the morning they cannot come into school. These symptoms include:

✓ High temperature

✓ Cough

✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties

✓ Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

If your child does display symptoms during the school day, we will be ringing you to collect her immediately. If you are at work and cannot collect your child at the time, you will have to provide someone who can do this. It is vital that contact details are up to date on our system so please email Regina if these have changed (rcook@stjosephsclon.com)

I have attached our “Procedure for a child becoming unwell” to this email as well as our detailed schedule for bringing children in safely every morning of the first week back (our Welcome Week).

We will not be able to welcome parents into the school building at any time unless by prior appointment. The only exception to this rule will be our new Junior Infants children and parents. We will be welcoming our new Juniors and parents (1 / 2 people max to accompany the child) into our school hall on their first morning. All other parents will have to stay outside the gates of the school. This is such a change for our school but I know you will understand that under the current circumstances we have to minimise the number of people accessing the building in order to keep it safe for everyone.

**Children joining St Joseph’s GNS for the first time (Senior Infants – 6th class)**

All newly enrolled children from Senior Infants – 6th class will be met by Mrs Scally ourside the middle gate on their first morning. Please check in with Mrs Scally before leaving your child at the gate and she will assist you in finding your class /gate etc. If you have any queries before then, please email principal@stjosephsclon.com

**Some questions you may have:**

1. **Will my child be able to wear her uniform in school?**

Yes she will. Here is the timetable for wearing tracksuit / uniform for every class except Junior Infants. We would like our new Junior Infants to wear their school uniform on the first day of school please.

Monday / Tuesdays: School tracksuit

Wednesday: School uniform

Thursday / Friday: School tracksuit

This would ensure that parents would have time to wash / dry school tracksuit on a Tuesday evening to have it ready again for Thursday morning.

1. **Can my child bring her own hand sanitizer to school?**

Yes. We will be encouraging all children to bring their own hand sanitizer in their bags. There are also hand sanitizers available outside every classroom and at every exit/entry point of the school

1. **Can my child wear her own face mask to school?**

We will be following the guidelines from the DES around wearing of face masks which says that the wearing of face masks for under-13’s is not required in primary school.

1. **What do I do if my child forgets her lunch / books?**

If you have to drop off a lunch / books during the school day, we would ask you to come in the middle gate and go the window of the office where Regina will take the items from you through her window. If Regina is not in the office at the time, please leave the clearly labelled items in the plastic container outside this window and they will be given to your child.

1. **What do I do with the book rental books I have and signing up for book rental for the coming year?**

Please return all the book rental books on Tuesday 1st September to the teacher. These books will be quarantined for 72 hours and then re distributed to the appropriate class. You will get the opportunity to sign up for and pay for book rental for 2020/2021 during the month of September

1. **How much will school fees be this year?**

For the foreseeable future we will not be having visiting teacher’s into our school (this will be regularly reviewed in light of Government guidelines) and so classes like Speech & Drama (teacher’s will be following their own drama curriculum), French, Yoga, Playball etc will not be happening. Because of this we have decided to ask for €20 per child for the first term to cover photocopying / art supplies. Book Rental will be the only thing you will pay for if you are signing up for that. Cost of book rental will be:

2nd - 6th €30 per child

Junior Infants / Senior Infants / 1st Class: €2 (covers the cost of three reading books)

We will also be asking for €9 pupil insurance as usual to cover 24 hr activities.

1. **Will opening times be staggered on the first morning?**

Yes our opening times will be staggered for the two weeks in school. After that we will be reviewing how this is working for everyone. This is to ensure that our girls can come into school safely. Here is the timetable for opening:

**9 am**

5th class will come in the middle gate / up the middle stairs and into their classroom

6th class will come in the side gate (Sherpa gate)/ in the end door of the corridor and up the stairs into their classroom

**9.10 am**

Senior Infants will come in the side gate (Sherpa gate) / in the end door of the corridor and up the stairs to their classroom

4th class will come in the middle gate / up the middle stairs and into their classroom

**9.20 am**

1st class will come in the side gate (Sherpa gate) / in the end door of the corridor and up the middle stairs to their classroom

3rd class will come in the middle gate / through the hall gate (small gate below hall)/ in through the foyer and up the end stairs to their classroom

**9.30am**

2nd class will come in the side gate (Sherpa gate) / in the end door of the corridor and up the middle stairs to their classroom

Junior Infants (and parents) will come in the middle gate / in the middle door and down the corridor to the hall where they will be welcomed by Ms Loughnan (class teacher)

All class teachers will collect their class from the gates on the first morning and I will be around if there are any late comers that need to be shown to their classroom. We will be practicing entering and leaving the school safely throughout our first week with the children and so it will become very routine for them within a short space of time. The biggest difference will be that there will be no playing in the yard before school time for the foreseeable future.

1. **What will happen at the end of the school day? Will going home times be staggered?**

Yes again for the first two weeks we will stagger exit times from the school yard. This is to minimise the risk in the car park and to ensure there will be no congregating in the car park. Going home times will be as follows:

Junior Infants: 12 noon for the first two weeks & 1.50pm after that.

Junior Infants will be collected from the end door of the corridor by 1 parent / guardian. Please try to maintain social distancing and wear a face mask while queuing to collect your child.

Senior Infants: 1.50pm

Senior Infants will be collected from the middle door of the corridor. Again please try to maintain social distancing and we would ask you also to wear a face mask when collecting your child.

All other classes:

2.40 pm: 4th / 5th / 6th

2.50 pm: 1st / 2nd / 3rd

The girls will be lined up in the yard (no pods apply while out on the yard) where the class teacher will direct them to leave safely through the middle gate. There will be no need for any parent to come into the school yard to collect their child.

Please note there will be no Junior Warden scheme operating for the foreseeable future (this will be reviewed regularly).

1. **Will my child spend her day in a “pod” and who will be in her “pod”?**

As you have probably heard by now, there will be no requirement for children from Junior Infants – 2nd class to socially distance within the classroom / yard. However each class in the school is considered a “bubble” and those bubbles cannot interact in the yard. There will be a separate zone for each class to ensure this.

Classes from 3rd – 6th class will be divided into pods while in the school building. There will be 6 children in each pod and the pods will be divided alphabetically by the teacher. Your child will know who is in her pod when she arrives into school on 1st September. When these classes are outside in the school yard there will be no requirement to physically distance and so the class bubble can play together. It is only when your child is in the school building that pods will apply.

1. **Will there be staggered break / lunch times?**

Yes there will be staggered breaks and lunchtimes for all classes next year.

1. **Will the school be cleaned regularly?**

We have always been very lucky with the cleaning company that we have employed to clean the school and their hours will be increased next year. The school will be thoroughly cleaned every day – all toilets / floors / high touch points etc will be cleaned by our cleaners while desks/chairs will be disinfected every afternoon by the class teachers.

I know there will be questions that I haven’t covered so please send them to me on Class Dojo and I will do my best to answer them for you. We will use Class Dojo as a forum for parents and again for our new Junior Infants parents, please email me any questions you may have.

The most important thing parents need to do for now is to talk calmly to children and make coming back to school something to look forward to. There will be changes but there will also be lots of fun as well.

Kind Regards

Darina Scally