



**Restart Information Update 20 August 2020**

Dear Parent,

As you may be aware, the Minister of Education issued updated guidance to schools at the end of last week to support the reopening of schools. It has taken some time to study this guidance, which provides a framework for the safe reopening of schools, but there are many areas in it which are open-ended allowing schools to make decisions based on their own local context. Therefore, there is scope for schools to do things slightly differently. I would suggest that you ignore what other schools are doing and not assume that we are doing the same. Below is some additional information and reminders, which should answer any remaining queries that you may have:

**School bags** – we have decided that school bags should not be brought to school for the time-being. Apologies if this is contrary to what you may have been told previously. Please get a large clear plastic zip folder for children to carry books to and from school. Years 1 & 2 can use the book bags. Any Year 3 pupils who still have their book bags from Year 2 can continue to use it. Book bags/zip folders can be easily wiped and are less bulky than school bags. We would suggest that parents give them a wipe each day upon return from school.

**Lunch boxes/water bottles** – preferably, wipeable lunch boxes. Children will need to bring water bottles as water fountains will be unavailable, but water bottles can be refilled from taps if required.

**Stationery Items** – as per the note you received on 30<sup>th</sup> June regarding stationery, this is still the case. However, some parents have asked if children need a pencil case for use in school. This would be advisable, as it will keep colouring pencils, felt tips, erasers, sharpener etc all neatly together. A small, cheap pencil case will suffice, which can be put into the large zip folder along with any other items that may be supplied by the teacher, which will remain in school. (You therefore require 2 large zip folders or bookbag and folder – one to transport items home and one to remain in school). All items should be clearly labelled with your child's name before being sent into school to show ownership and to prevent sharing of items.

**Homework** – it would be very difficult for children to learn to read and make sufficient progress without some homework. However, as reading books/text books are shared resources, these may be quarantined in school for a couple of days before being redistributed to other children, so please be patient if your child does not get access to books as soon as might be the norm.

**Face Masks** – wearing of face masks on school buses is not mandatory for primary school children. However, the guidance from the Minister strongly recommends that all pupils wear a face mask on a school bus, where it is appropriate for them to do so. If your child is going to be travelling on the bus and you wish them to wear a mask, then there are 2 options:

1. Wear a disposable mask, which is put into the bin upon entering school and have a 2<sup>nd</sup> mask available for the return journey.
2. Wear a reusable mask, which is put into a small plastic bag and then into the zip folder/book bag to be taken home to be washed. A 2<sup>nd</sup> mask should also be available for the return journey.

**School Meals information, term dates and much more is published on our website:**

[www.dromaraps.org](http://www.dromaraps.org)

Then go to: Parents → News 20/21 → Monthly Newsletters → Start of Year Booklet 20-21.

Please do take some time to read through this booklet as it contains a lot of information to help ensure smooth running of the school.

**Safety Protocols in school**

With regard to social distancing, the guidance states that “The Executive, on 6 August 2020, agreed that the stringent application of **social distancing requirements between pupils will be relaxed from 17 August.** Public Health guidance with respect to social distancing of 2 metres (2m) will remain in place between adults and as far as possible between adults and pupils.” This is why we are able to

bring all pupils back on a full time basis. This simply would not have been possible without relaxing of social distancing between pupils. Children will be reminded about good hygiene and will have regular intervals during the school day to wash their hands. They will have easy access to tissues for catching coughs and sneezes.

Staff interaction will be kept to a minimum and as far as possible, staff will remain as part of a 'class bubble', but some staff will have to move around to cover the afternoon classes or for supervisory purposes, but only after appropriate hygiene practices have been completed. Staff will have access to masks, gloves, visors and aprons to be used when needed and they will be expected to adhere to social distancing. If a child needs intimate care or to be comforted in some small way, a staff member may need to put on PPE.

**PE lessons** - these will take place outdoors if the weather permits, otherwise we will do some form of activity in the hall, as it is of benefit to the children to have some physical activity. However, we will endeavour to minimise sharing of equipment and prevent contact between pupils. As with the classrooms, we will ensure all areas are adequately ventilated.

We are implementing slightly staggered break times to allow for greater spacing out of pupils in playgrounds.

The main corridors are marked out with tape and arrows and, as far as possible, a 'keep left' system will operate for moving around the school building.

Additional cleaning protocols are in place. A member of our cleaning staff will be on site throughout the day and will engage in continual cleaning of objects that will be touched regularly, e.g. door handles, computers keyboard/mouse, toilet areas, desks and tables etc.

As we enter our new school year, please bear with us as we find our way with new procedures. We are doing all we can in a short space of time to ensure that everyone is safe. However, what we do will be kept under constant review and if changes are required we will let you know.

For your information also the Minister of Education has provided a letter for all parents and I would ask that you take a moment to read the leaflet from the Department of Education which highlights some key points aimed at ensuring everyone's safety. Both of these documents are on the school website.

Yours sincerely,

*A Armstrong*

Principal

# EDUCATION RESTART



## Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

### Everyone should continue to:

- wash hands regularly
- cover coughs and sneezes
- practice social distancing
- follow the latest public health advice

### What should I not do?

- Don't** send your child to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms
- Don't** allow your child to use public transport unless you have no alternative
- Don't** gather at the school entrance/gate
- Don't** allow your child to share food/drinks with friends

### What should I do?

- Do** let the school know if your child will be absent due to COVID-19 symptoms
- Do** encourage your child to socially distance, if it is possible
- Do** encourage good hand hygiene
- Do** use alternative transport if you can
- Do** walk or cycle if it's safe and appropriate to do so
- Do** use park and ride or other car-parking facilities (if available) and walk the remainder of the journey to school
- Do** avoid parking close to or at the school gates
- Do** encourage the use of face coverings on school transport

Further information, including Frequently Asked Questions for parents and carers, can be found on the Department of Education's website at [www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk).



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