



Dear Members of the GETNS School Community,

I hope you and your families are keeping well and enjoying the final weeks of the summer holidays.

As you are aware, our school has now been closed since 12th March due to the COVID-19 situation. We are busy preparing our school and grounds for our reopening on 1st September, 2020.

Re-opening the school safely will require the support and co-operation of all members of our School Community – The Board of Management, School Leadership, our Staff Team, Parents, Guardians and Pupils. By working together, communicating openly and adhering to our guidelines, we can ensure that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner which minimises the risk of the spread of Covid-19 and allows the vital work of Teaching and Learning to proceed.

We have been working on our plan for the safe reopening of the school over the summer months and have published the DES COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools on our school website.

We have also published our COVID-19 Policy Statement on the school website. Our BoM will keep you informed as to the progress of our re-opening plans over the coming 10 days and will provide you with the information you will need.

RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance

We are currently working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be precisely distanced in all respects but in as many as possible.

Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -

Increasing Separation. This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom. We are very keen for connections to be maintained between our class bubbles, and we will be working on

creating opportunities for that through online project work, online and video communication opportunities for our pupils between class bubbles.

Decreasing Interaction. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground. We will make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated in a specifically prepared isolation area (made as child friendly as possible) and parents/guardians will be asked to collect them from the school.

If your child has travelled to any country which is not on the Green List, they will be required to stay home and not return to school until their 14th day of isolation has been completed.

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

The In School Management Team and Board of Management are working on our drop off and collection plans at the moment and these will be ready to share with you by the end of this week. We are making every effort to create a timetable which is as supportive as possible to all families.

We would like to inform you that, as things currently stand, we will be suspending all Infant Club programmes and Extra Curricular activities after school hours until further notice. This means that Junior and Senior Infant children who travel to school on our school bus will need to be collected by a parent/guardian at home time. We are very disappointed to have to suspend these lovely activities and services as we know the children really enjoy them and our team enjoy facilitating them. Hopefully, this will be a temporary measure and these can gradually be brought back in when we feel it is safe to do so.

Each school is required to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to assist and coordinate the whole school response to Covid 19. We are pleased to inform you that the LWR of GETNS is Emmett Hickey. Emmett is committed to this important role and is looking forward to supporting us all in safeguarding our school community.

Please expect our next update on Friday, 21st August, outline all details of drop off and collection procedures.

Thank you, all, for your support of our reopening process. We understand it is an anxious time for many of you and we are working as hard as we can to create a happy and safe learning environment for your children.

Kindest regards and very best wishes,

The Board of Management