**** **Covid Response Plan for Staff, Parents and Children**

The BoM and School Staff are looking forward to welcoming all our pupils and parents / guardians back to school for the 2020/2021 school year on the 26st August.

The following structures will be in place. They may seem stringent but they will be necessary to keep everyone safe. Please try to understand that our goal is to get everyone into school as safely as possible and to try to have a happy, healthy educational environment for the children and staff. Some of the arrangements may have to be altered depending on national guidelines or for health and safety purposes at our school.

It will take some time for all of us to get used to the “new circumstances” as we become familiar with the new routines and procedures designed to keep everyone safe and to prevent the spread of the virus. There will, undoubtedly, be some unforeseen challenges and we will deal with these as they arise.

We would like to thank you for your co-operation and look forward to working with you as we assist the children adapt to the necessary changes. We are also conscious of the fact that our pupils have not been in school since March and that they are looking forward to coming back to school to meet their friends again. We are aware that our new pupils are beginning a school year at a challenging time and have made plans to ensure that their arrival will be as free from stress as possible.

**What to do if your child has any symptoms of Covid-19:**

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 and parents asked to collect them from the school.

Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period

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.

**Morning Arrival:**

We would ask all parents to familiarise themselves with the following drop-off and collection routines for the safe delivery and collection of pupils from school. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year.

We are going to attempt arrival without staggering arrival times as we feel this will cause further disruption to you and your families, however this may need to change depending on how safely we can do this.

We would ask that children are dropped to school as close to opening time as possible. Teachers will open the classroom doors and collect the children from their lines to enter at 9.20am. **Unfortunately it will not be possible to supervise the children in the halla on a wet morning as they will need to stay in their class ‘bubbles’ at all times.** If there is very inclement weather classroom doors will open at 9:15am.

We appreciate that dropping off the Junior & Senior Infant pupils to their line in the yard is essential, but for the older pupils a drop off at the school gate is desirable. Parents from 3rd to 6th class are asked to remain off the yard. Parents from Junior Infants to Second class are asked to remain at the perimeter of the yard and maintain social distance from other parents and children while your child lines up.

It is imperative that

* adults do not come within 2m of each other
* parents do not try to have meetings with members of staff in the playground at drop-off and collection times – meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement. (This may have to be more restrictive depending on guidance - it is quite possible that the recommendation will be for remote meetings/telephonic communications.)

**Lining up**

There will be extra lines in the yard for lining up (two per class) with shorter horizontal lines painted across each line 1m distance apart for the children to stand on. Please tell your children what these are for and where to stand when they arrive at school.

**Entrance to School**

Children will enter their classes via the external classroom door. Parents will not be permitted to enter the school at any time without appointment. **This includes Junior Infants.** I know this will be difficult especially during the first week but we will ensure the children feel comfortable and safe. We will also take a photograph of each of the Junior Infants in their class on their first day at school and email this to you for nostalgia.

Forgotten lunches/clothing/equipment may only be delivered to the school if an appointment has been made to do so via phone/email.

Any early collection/late arrival of pupils must be arranged in advance where possible by phone/email.

**Book Rental Payments**

Each child must bring their book rental money in an envelope marked with their name and the amount of money or a cheque enclosed. Each envelope must contain the correct amount of money. If siblings are paying for a family, please send envelope in with eldest child.

**Contacting School/Appointments**

We will be operating an open door policy in the best way we can but we also need to ensure the safety of everyone in the school community. As a result anyone who does not work at or attend the school will not be permitted to enter the school without an appointment. If you wish to make an appointment with a member of staff please either ring the school on 9851689 or make an appointment via the school email address**holyfamily@holyfamilyballyshannon.ie**and we will arrange a meeting for you.

**Materials for class**

Every child will need to have their own materials as sharing is no longer possible. Please ensure your child has the following items, clearly labelled with their name.

1x plastic box to hold all books and copies in the class as distribution and shelf space is currently prohibited. Please ensure this box is strong and can hold all of your child’s books & copies. This box will be kept under your child’s desk and only he/she will access it. *Recommended size approx. 35cm (L) x 25cm(W) x 20cm(H)*

1x pencil case with pencils, biros (4th-6th), crayons (Jnr Infs-1st)/markers & colouring pencils (3rd -6th)

Eraser, pencil sharpener, glue stick, highlighter.

1x ruler

1x scissors (will be collected and kept in pots for each pod)

2x paintbrushes (one thick and one thin)

Materials for homework

Individual antibacterial sanitiser if they wish

**Classes/Pods/Bubbles**

Pupils and their teachers will be structured into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or “Pods” within those class bubbles to the extent that this is practical.

**Playtime**

The children will play in their class ‘Bubble’, they will be permitted to play with anyone in their classroom but will not mix with children from other classrooms. They will be allocated an area that they must remain in on the yard. Please discuss this with your children, it is for the safety of everyone. I know this will be difficult for children who are in split classes, however this is in line with government guidelines for reopening our schools and it will not be possible for them to play with the other half of their year group if they do not share the same classroom. Please explain this to your children as it is for the safety of everyone.

Children will not be permitted to bring equipment/balls/games from home to play with on the yard.

**Lunch**

The children will wash their hands before eating and will eat at their desks in class. Please ensure that they are able to open and close lunch boxes, drinks and all items they have been given as staff members will be unable to help with this. Infant classes should practise this at home before returning to school.

**Uniform/Coats/Shoes**

School uniform will remain the same. Any shirt cuffs should remain unbuttoned for ease of hand washing, staff members will not be able to open these for children. The children should be able to zip/unzip, button/unbutton their coats without help and tie/untie/open/close shoes by themselves. I would recommend velcro or slip on shoes for infants or anyone who has difficulty with laces.

As we will be exercising and conducting PE lessons outdoors, all children will need to have a coat that is waterproof and flexible for ease of movement. Hoodies/zip up sweatshirts are not an acceptable substitute for an outdoor coat/jacket.

**Home time, leaving the school**

The children will leave the school through their classroom external doors. Teachers will walk children around to the front of the school at departure time.  Any parents collecting are asked to remember to stay socially distant while waiting.

As a settling in period, **Junior Infants** will finish school at 12:30pm from 26th August to 5th September and 2pm from 7th September onwards.

Please clean/sanitise materials and book covers when homework is completed before placing back in school bag.

Could all pupils have pencils and colours available to them at home for completing homework tasks, it would be safer to leave pencil cases in school at all times.

We are delighted we will be able to return to school and look forward to the day when some of the restrictions can be lifted. In the meantime your support and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. I look forward to meeting you and your children.

Warm regards,

Very Rev. Canon R. Munster Sarah-Jane Lewis,

**Chairperson, Board of Management**  **Principal Teacher**

*\*This is a working document, it is not exhaustive and may need to be altered.*