



24th February 2021.

Re-Opening Covid Response Plan for Staff, Parents and Children.

The BoM and School Staff are looking forward to welcoming pupils and parents / guardians back to school, classes will return as follows:

- Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st, 2nd & 3rd (as they are in a multigrade setting with 2nd class) will return on Monday 1st March.
- 4th, 5th and 6th classes will return on Monday 15th March unless otherwise advised by government.

The following structures will continue to be in place and some additional safety measures have been added. We must insist that everyone adheres to these measures while on school grounds. 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. We are asking that you are extra vigilant in relation to this and if in any doubt please keep your child/ren at home until you are sure it is safe for them to return to school.

staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Staff and pupils should cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.

Children who have travelled from any other countries 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.

Return to Education Form

All children must have a completed Return to Education Form with them on Monday morning. This form is attached to your email. Please print and fill out the form and place on top of the books in your child's box.

Morning Arrival:

All parents/guardians are requested to wear masks while on school grounds inside or outside, this includes when dropping off or collecting your children.

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 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. **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. **There cannot be social gatherings of any kind among adults on school grounds at any time of the day for any length of time.**

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. Please call the office or email your child's teacher to arrange a phone call, face to face meetings will not be permitted during level 5 restrictions. Access to the school will only take place for essential purposes.

Lining up

We will continue to use the 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 remind your children what these are for and where to stand when they arrive at school.

Entrance to School

Children will continue to enter their classes via the external classroom door. Parents will not be permitted to enter the school at any time without prior arrangement and this will only take place in exceptional/essential circumstances. We would ask that parents do not approach classroom doors as this can result in crowding.

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.

Contacting School/Appointments

We will be operating a virtual 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. Please remember your child's teacher may be teaching when you send an email so it could be a little while before they have a chance to get back to you.

Materials for class

Every child will continue to need to have their own materials as sharing is not possible. Please speak to your child/ren about this and reassure them that although sharing is a wonderful thing to do, we can't do it at the moment as we are trying to keep one another safe.

Each child will continue to need to have a box to keep all their own items in. As they will be heavy on return to school, please place them beside your child in the line. Staff members will aid the children in bringing boxes into class. We ask that parents do not approach the classroom with boxes.

For your child/ren to be able to participate in all class activities, please ensure they have the following items, clearly labelled with their name and replenish anything that has been used up e.g. glue sticks.

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) * Please ensure your child still has every colour they need in case some were misplaced.

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

Masks

It is not a recommendation that children in primary schools wear masks.

However, your child is permitted to wear a mask if they wish. If any child chooses to wear a mask and removes it during the school day we ask that it is kept in their box and not placed on a shared desk.

Soap & Sanitiser

We will continue to provide the same soap and sanitiser at school, however we do understand that the same product won't suit everyone, if you wish to provide your own, please place in a labelled zip lock plastic bag for your child/ren to keep in their box.

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. Your child's pod may be different from last term but they will remain in the pod they are placed in on Monday until the next break from school (Easter holidays).

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. Thanks to our Parents' Association, we have great yard equipment for the children to play with, this equipment will be sanitised.

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, except in very inclement weather, 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. Junior Infants, can be collected from the yard outside their classroom at 2pm. We will continue to stagger collection times Ms Maguire's and Mr Sweeny's (From 15th March) classes will finish at 2:50pm and Ms Mullaney and Mr McGroary's (From 15th March) classes will finish at 3pm.

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 continue to look forward to the day when some of the restrictions can be lifted. In the meantime your support and cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Warm regards,

Very Rev. Canon R. Munster

Chairperson, Board of Management

Sarah-Jane Lewis

Principal Teacher

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