



COVID-19 POLICY

2021/2022

Our COVID-19 policy is a fluid working document amended according to updated advice from the relevant Public Health authorities. All such advice is communicated to staff, students and parents promptly, and we amend our policy to reflect relevant response suggestions. Our Covid 19 Policy Document is framed within the wider context of the Dept. of Education and Skills Covid 19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Port-Primary Schools. The Covid 19 Response Plan in turn details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Governments “*Work Safely Protocol*” to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid 19 in the school environment.

Induction Training:

All staff (teaching, non-teaching, SNA's, supervisors, and cleaners) will undertake to view the relevant induction training materials provided by the DES and will have completed their RTW's prior to their return to work. This will ensure that staff have the knowledge and understanding of latest Covid 19 related advice on public health and its subsequent impact within a school setting.

COVID-19 Signage:

COVID-19-related signage is displayed prominently throughout the school and its environs, both internally and externally, reminding all of us of our responsibilities regarding hygiene practices and physical distancing protocols.

Drop-off & Collection:

In so far as is feasible, we would strongly encourage our students to walk or cycle to school. We do understand that this is not possible for all students, particularly those who do not live within close proximity to the school and in times of inclement weather conditions.

Please note that in a non-Covid related development building work will commence in the coming weeks, (Autumn 2021) in the vicinity of the lower driveway adjacent to the school. This will mean that the school gate at the Newcourt Road entrance will be closed to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike for the duration of the building works. We will advise you of specific dates in due course.

We have identified staggered exit times for the different year groups at the end of the school day, (please see grid document attached). This is intended to reduce both traffic congestion and gatherings of people on school grounds thus minimizing the risk of the spread of the virus.

Uniform:

All students will be expected to attend school in full uniform, including appropriate footwear and school jacket. You are reminded at this point that we have a new addition to the jacket range which is available at the usual outlets. We will also be presenting each student with a commemorative school tie celebrating the Centenary of Pres Bray in the community, a special landmark in the history of the College. A separate communication regarding our uniform policy will issue at a later date.

Regular Hand Washing and Sanitising:

Students are strongly encouraged to wash and sanitise their hands regularly, especially after using the toilet and on returning to class after break times. Good hand hygiene practices as well as coughing and sneezing etiquette are strongly encouraged.

Wall mounted sanitiser dispensers will be located at entry and exit points to the school, as well as inside each classroom and throughout school corridors and other commonly used areas.

Students may bring their own personal hand sanitiser if they wish.

Masks/ Face Coverings:

Masks/Face Coverings must be worn at all times where social distancing of 2 metres cannot be observed, including within all classrooms. Each student and teacher is obliged to have his/her own mask every day and it is recommended that these masks are washed regularly. Therefore, a supply of back-up masks is recommended for each student and teacher.

If a student or teacher misplaces his/her mask over the course of the school day, a single-use mask can be provided by the school for use on that day only.

Exceptions can be made for students with breathing difficulties, high anxiety levels, skin allergies, and any diagnosis where a face covering is not recommended. These students will be addressed on a case by case basis and will be guided by the most recent public health advice.

Lockers, Books & Materials:

As we are minimising the movement of students during the school-day, and as the locker areas are congregation hotspots, students will not have access to lockers for the upcoming school year. Please note that there will be some unavoidable mixing of students within a year group to accommodate banding of subject choices

1st – 4th Years will be assigned to base classrooms with each student assigned a desk each. To that end, students will be able to store their materials at their desk. We recommend that each student (in particular incoming 1st years) buy a storage box for his books, materials etc. A box of deeper dimension as opposed to length and not greater than 35 litres is recommended as occupies less floor space. These boxes may be stored on or under the students assigned desk.

5th and 6th Years will rotate between a specific number of classrooms, all zoned within one corridor where practically possible.

Students may not share books and materials. To that end, it is very important that your son has his own materials (pens, pencils etc.) each and every day in school.

In order to minimise the number of books being brought to and from school every day, teachers may use the facility of e-books and Google Classroom for assigning homework. Further clarity will be provided on this following consultation with staff in due course.

Wearing of PE gear

1st to 4th year students may wear their PE uniform to school on the day they are timetabled to have PE and remain in same for the day due to restrictions in the use of our changing facilities.

Lost & Found:

Students will no longer be able to come to Lost & Found for lost items as has been routine practice to date. Any items brought to Lost & Found, will have to be isolated for a period before being returned to the student. Please ensure that all clothes, books, materials and belongings are clearly labelled with your son's name and class.

Toilet Visits:

Numbers in toilets and frequency of toilet visits will be restricted throughout the course of the day to minimise student congregation in these areas. Students will be permitted to use the following toilets only:

- 1st Years: Toilets in Rice Building
- 2nd and 6th Years: Toilets on Bottom Corridor
- 3rd, 4th and 5th Years: Toilets on Top Corridor

When the Sports hall is in use, students will have access to the toilets in the Sports Hall.

All bathrooms will be cleaned frequently throughout the school-day.

Lunch/ Canteen:

The canteen will be available to students at the big lunchbreak, where students will join socially distanced queues.

If students wish to purchase food from the canteen for their break, they may pre-order in advance. Further details on our new pre-order system will be revealed in due course.

All students (1st to 5th year) must remain on school grounds for the duration of their lunchbreak. This is to minimize our student body mingling within the wider community throughout the day. Students who regularly go home at lunchtime must have written parental permission to do so and this permission

should be presented to the Deputy Principal as early as possible on return to school. Groups of students are not permitted to congregate in one household during lunchtime.

Cleaning of School Buildings:

Extra cleaning personnel and extended cleaning hours will be in operation throughout the school day and beyond. This will facilitate a deeper and more intense cleaning of the entire school.

The buildings will be routinely cleaned throughout the day and will be intensely and deeply cleaned after 4pm each day once students have vacated the building. Fogging of classrooms will be undertaken on regular intervals throughout the school year.

After School Study:

To facilitate this extended and more enhanced cleaning, we regret that After School Study will be available initially to 6th year students only from Sept 13th., (further details will be furnished in due course). We apologise unreservedly for this decision; however, the health and safety of all must be our priority at this time. More intense cleaning requires the corridors and classrooms to be completely vacated after 4pm.

In due course, we hope to introduce 3rd and 5th year students to After School Study on a staggered basis at a later stage. This will depend on the progress of the virus.

Extra-Curricular Activities:

We are currently awaiting DES/Public Health guidelines and advice on how best to manage all extra-curricular activities within a school setting. We are also currently liaising with the various sporting representative bodies with regards to the cautious and safe return to training and games. The health and safety of all students, teachers and coaches alike will receive our utmost attention in these circumstances.

Visitors to the School:

We would please ask parents/guardians not to visit the school over the course of the day unless it is for an essential appointment. You can still meet with a member of staff in an appropriate socially distanced way when the need arises, but please make an appointment in advance through the school office. Those parents/guardians that do visit the school will be required to sign in and out at the reception desk. A contact log is maintained in the secretary's office. In the interests of health and wellbeing for all in the school community, all non-essential visits to the school must be curtailed. We have created a COVID-19 Visitors Policy to further demonstrate our commitment to COVID-19 protocols. This is on display on the school website.

Travel abroad:

We would advise you to consult the HSE and the Dept. of Foreign Affairs websites in relation to the above. The school will be guided by advice from said bodies and will keep abreast of any changes if/when they are announced.

Staff/Students Displaying Symptoms:

For the safety of the entire school community, students must not come to school if they are displaying symptoms of:

- A fever (temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher)
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Cold, cough or viral infection
- Lost or changed sense of smell or taste

If your son/staff member is displaying any of the above symptoms, we strongly ask of you to please keep your son/staff member at home/out of school. We are attempting to minimise the introduction of the spread of infection in the school in the first instance. To that end, if your son has symptoms the night before or on the morning of a school day, please help us contain the risk of spread of infection by keeping him out of school. All staff have been asked to do likewise. Staff members are aware that they must contact senior management if they develop symptoms during the working day.

Dealing with a Suspected Case:

Any student who displays the above symptoms during the school-day should immediately inform a member of staff where they will be promptly directed to the isolation area. Parents/Guardians will be contacted to collect their son immediately. All contact details provided for the students must be up to date before the school reopens. All students must have always at least one contact available.

On entry to the school grounds, parents/guardians should ring the school office to notify of their arrival, where their son will be brought to them in the carpark.

We strongly advise parents/guardians at this point to contact their GP for further guidance and direction.

Sanctions/Code of Behaviour:

We have updated our Code of Behaviour to reflect the changes brought about in the school due to COVID-19 restrictions. Any non-compliance with our implemented protocols will be seen as a serious breach of discipline and will be dealt with accordingly. We please ask all parents/guardians and students to support the school's endeavours to providing a safe environment for us all. Frequent non-compliance or non-adherence to safety protocols may result in students being asked to remain at home pending a satisfactory conversational outcome between parents/guardians and school management.