



Dear Parents

I hope this letter finds you all safe and well. After last night's Board of Management meeting I wanted to inform you that the Board has approved Aughacasla NS Covid-19 Response Plan which enables the school to reopen for all children on Monday August 31st. The school's Covid-19 Response Plan is based on what was recommended by the Dept of Education in The Roadmap for the Full Return to School and also in the Health Service Executive's Interim Recommendations for the reopening of Schools and Education Facilities. In this letter I am going to lay out the main elements that are going to affect the day to day running of the school and your children's attendance here. This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change.

- In the morning supervision will start as normal at 9:10am. Children though will now no longer be allowed to go outside and play and will instead proceed directly to their classroom and remain there where they will be supervised by an adult. School will then start as normal at 9:30am. When children are being dropped off we would kindly ask that parents would ensure that their children do not mix with other children outside of their child's Classroom Bubble. Parents should wait a moment or two if the school entrance is busy before allowing their child to proceed up the school driveway to school. For the first day of school parents of Junior Infant children will be allowed to accompany their child up the school driveway to the Junior end school entrance where they will be met by a member of school staff who will escort their child into the classroom. Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building.
- Each classroom will be operating in a Class Bubble. This means that they will not be mixing with any other children from other classrooms in the school while they are in school. Each classroom will also operate a Pod system. In this system each classroom will keep the children in specific groups. This is to minimise contact with other children while indoors and maintain social distancing of 1 meter in the classroom. When children are outside on break, they are not expected to maintain their Classroom Pods. This is due to the likelihood of virus transmission being much lower outdoors. Children though should refrain from personal contact like handshaking and hugging.
- Each Classroom Bubble though will not be allowed to mix with another Classroom Bubble at break times. To facilitate this the school staff have agreed to stagger our break times. We will now have 2 small breaks and 2 big breaks. The new break times are as follows:

Aughacasla National School, Camp, Tralee

Principal: David Doyle

Tel No; 066 7139456 Email;camp.ias@eircom.net

Roll Number 14767Q



Small Break 10:45 - 10:55 Infants and 3rd & 4th
11:00 - 11:10am 1st & 2nd and 5th & 6th

Big Break 12:45pm - 1:15pm Infants and 3rd & 4th
1:20pm – 1:50pm 1st & 2nd and 5th & 6th

Each Classroom will now have their own designated play area where they can play separate to other Classroom Bubbles. This is to prevent Bubbles from mixing.

- At the end of the school day we will also be staggering the going home times of each Classroom Bubble to prevent a confluence of both parents and children from gathering at the school gate. Each Bubble will be escorted to the school gate by their class teacher. We would ask that parents would arrive only at the time when their child is due to be picked up. Parents should remain in their car and only exit it to pick up their child as quickly as possible. If a parent has children in different class groupings, then they should return and wait in their car until their next child is brought to the school gate.

The pickup times for each class are as follows

3:10pm 5th & 6th Class

3:15pm 1st & 2nd Class

3:20pm 3rd & 4th Class and Children on the 'Big Bus'

The children who go home on the 'Big Bus' will proceed to and remain in the hall until 3:20 where they will sit with their assigned partner which will be given to them by Bus Eireann and is not the responsibility of the school to assign to them. These children will be escorted down to the school gate by Mrs Galvin.

Children who go on the small bus will continue to go home as they have always done.

The infant classes will continue to be walked down to the school gate as normal at 2:10pm (Junior Infants will be collected at 12pm for the first two weeks of term.) On wet days parents should not exit their cars until their child is brought to the main entrance door to the school building by Mrs Galvin. This is to prevent parents congregating at the school entrance.

I would like to thank all the school staff for facilitating these changes and agreeing to the extra supervision duties during this health emergency.

On top of these changes to the normal school routine there are also several procedural changes that both parents and students need to be aware of.

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- Parents need to be aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 which are defined as follows by the HSE and in the School's Covid-19 response plan

High Temperature

Cough

Shortness of Breath

Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

If a parent, pupil, or family member displays any of these symptoms then they are **not to attend the school under any circumstances.** They are to contact their GP and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation. Also, if you or any member of your household have been advised by the HSE that you are a close contact of a confirmed case of Covid 19 **then none of that household should attend the school.** They are again to contact their GP and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.

Pupils and staff who attend school and display any of these symptoms will be removed from their classroom and will be placed in the school's isolation area in the school hall under the supervision of a staff member. Parents and Guardians will be contacted to arrange to collect the pupil immediately. It is incumbent on parents to ensure that they have a means to collect their child if this occurs.

We are aware that a number of these symptoms are similar to common childhood ailments, but parents should always err on the side of caution and contact your local GP and follow their advice. If your child displays any symptoms of a viral respiratory infection, **they should not attend the school.** Staff will also have to follow the same procedure. I am making parents aware of these procedures now so that there is no confusion if an instance of this occurs during the school year.

- Access to the school building for Parents/Guardians is restricted to those who have received prior approval from the school principal for the visit. You will be required to complete a sign in sheet prior to entry for contact tracing purposes and should only enter the school at the senior end and make themselves known to the school principal.
- Hand and respiratory hygiene will be very important for students and other visitors to the school. To this end the school has invested a considerable amount to enhance the facilities to promote good hand and respiratory hygiene. Before children leave for school in the morning, we would ask all parents to ensure that children have washed their hands with soap and that their hands look clean. On entering the school building all entrants must sanitize their hands and dispensers will be located at both entrances and in each classroom. Pupils will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands

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After they use the toilet
After playing outdoors
When their hands are physically dirty
When they cough or sneeze

If a child's hands are physically dirty it is important that they wash their hands with soap as hand sanitizer is not suitable to use on hands that are visibly dirty. If a child coughs and sneezes they should do it into a tissue or the bend of their arm. After which they should dispose of the tissue safely and sanitize their hands.

- As a school we are also asking that every child would have their own personal hygiene kit. This will help us with managing hand hygiene facilities like wash basins and paper towel dispensers and to prevent excessive teaching time being lost while maintaining both good respiratory and hand hygiene. The kit can easily be contained in an old pencil case, lunchbox or small plastic bag in their school bag. It should contain tissues, a small bottle of hand sanitizer and a face cloth to dry hands. This is not a requirement for children to return to school and parents should not go to any extraordinary expense to purchase these items as they are all readily available in supermarkets or discount stores.
- There will also be an enhanced cleaning regime in the school with school staff regularly cleaning frequently touched objects and surfaces throughout the day. The school's caretaker's hours have been increased to allow for extra time to clean the school. Older students will be asked to wipe down their own work areas and chairs at the end of the day with suitable disinfectant wipes which will be provided to them prior to going home time. New detergents, disinfectants, PPE and cleaning equipment has been bought to facilitate this extra cleaning.
- Staff will also be using face coverings when they cannot maintain 2m social distance from other staff and pupils.
- In relation to school uniforms the Board of Management decided that parents can have flexibility in alternating between the school tracksuit and the formal school uniform on alternative days. Another practical step is to only wear the uniform to school and not go to different places like shops wearing it. Parents should **not** buy a uniform for everyday of the week.
- The Board would like to remind all parents with access to a Smart Phone to renew their access to the Aladdin school App. All payments where possible should now be made through the Aladdin School App. This step is to limit the need for cash to change hands. Parents will now also be able to submit the reason for their child's absence from school through the App thus reducing the need to give physical notes.

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- On Monday 31st the first day of school students do not have to bring every single item on their book list to school. There is no need for every single copy and hardback to be brought, one of each will suffice. Students can then bring the rest of the items in over the following week thus reducing the weight of the school bag and the need for parents to help their child carry the bag.

As stated at the start of the letter this is not an exhaustive list and is subject to change but it highlights the main points that are contained in the schools Covid-19 Response Plan. This plan will be available for parents to view on the school's website before school starts. I realise that this is a nervous time for both parents and students but as stated by numerous commentators recently there is no zero-risk solution to the reopening of our schools. By following these procedures, adopting a balanced approach, and applying common sense we can mitigate the dangers and reopen our school fully. This will allow our students to re-engage fully with learning, socialise with their peers, and begin to enjoy school life again. If you have any questions and queries, please feel free to email the school on camp.ias@eircom.net.

Míle Buíochas
David Doyle
School Principal

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