

Friday 4th September 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians,

Here are a few updates as we come to the end of our first full week back.

Next week, the same arrival and exit routine continues.

Arrival:

- Children continue to arrive from 8.50am – 9.20am
- Children on foot can enter through either gate
- Children with bikes or scooters:
 - Senior Infants – 3rd class children with bikes must enter at the green
 - 4th – 6th class children with bikes must enter through the front gate
- Junior Infants can arrive anytime from 9am – 9.20am. Parents accompany them through the car park to the ramp at the Senior Yard. Teachers on supervision duty will bring them to class.
- The gates to access the school will not open until 8.50am, even on wet days. We regret this, but it is in the interest of health and safety. Thanks for your understanding.

Hometime:

- All 4th – 6th class children exit via the front gate
- All Senior Infants – 3rd class children exit via the gate at the green. The classes will be staggered slightly from 2.35pm, with the 3rd classes exiting first, followed by the 2nd classes and finally the 1st classes.
- Junior Infant parents to collect the Junior Infants from the Senior yard at 1.35pm.

Please note, all external school doors will close at 9.20am. The gate at the green will be locked at 9.20am. If children arrive after that time, they must come to the front gate and walk to the door at reception, where Eileen will let them in. Parents, if your child is young, please accompany him/her to the door at reception. (This was the normal practice previously when children arrived after 9am).

Parents, on behalf of the Board of Management, and the school staff, I would like to thank you all most sincerely for your wonderful support as we have re-opened the school. We have observed you waiting patiently, from a distance, as we dismiss the children at hometime. The younger children have proudly told us that they are meeting mam/dad/minder at 'that tree over there' or 'beside that path'. As we said, in order for our new routines to work, we needed buy-in and support from all of you, and we have gotten it in bucket-loads. Thanks to all of you. And a massive thanks to the fantastic Parents' Association, who have supported us every step of the way. You see them every morning and afternoon, in high-viz vests, helping us at the gates, but they have helped to reopen the school in so many other ways too. Their support is invaluable, and is deeply appreciated.

The teachers have reported that the staggered start time is proving to be a lovely calm start to the day for all age-groups. The children are arriving into class in a steady trickle, and they are interacting

and playing with their small groups. Then, at 9.20, there is an orderly tidy-up, and they are all ready for work.

A huge congratulations to our youngest Scoil Mochua pupils. Our three Junior Infant classes started last Tuesday. The parents accompanied them to the Senior Yard, and the teachers brought them into the classrooms in groups. They were bright-eyed, full smiles (for the most part!), and waved confidently at the mams and dads as they followed their teacher around the corner to start a big new adventure. They have been super this week, and have returned each day with big smiles – always a good sign!

I am delighted to let you all know that the first week have been a resounding success. We have happy children back at school, and they are taking it all in their stride. It is a lovely reminder to us that children are remarkably resilient. As I direct them to the appropriate door in the morning, I am already being told that they know where to go! They are sanitising regularly, walking left on corridors, doing their best to remain in their pods in the classrooms, and generally settling back into our new routines. We have all missed the sound of laughter in classrooms and the yard, the endless stories and 'big' news items, and the children's enthusiasm for life. I think I speak for all of us when I say that it is uplifting and heart-warming to be back at school. Let's continue to follow all public health guidelines, and to work together to ensure that we stay in school.

Thanks as always for your support. September 2020 has definitely gotten off to a very good start. Long may it continue.

Kind Regards,

Catherine Carragher