



Holy Family School for the Deaf

Navan Road, Cabra, Dublin DO7 TH79

: 01 838 0058 | F: 01 838 0230 | E: info@holyfamilydeafschool.ie

Principal: Eimear O'Rourke, M. Ed | Deputy Principal: Eugene Doyle

21th August 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I hope you and your family are safe and well.

We are looking forward to welcoming our pupils back on the first week of September and helping them to re-engage with learning in Holy Family. Indeed, we cannot wait to see our school alive again with joyful and energetic pupils who long to be re-united with their friends and our staff.

A Safe Return

We have been working on our plan for the safe reopening of the school for some weeks now and have published the DES COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools on our school website. The Response Plan gives details of

- Physical preparation, signage, hand sanitiser stations,
- Advice, procedures and training for the safe return to working in the school for all school staff and pupils
- General and specific advice on how all pupils, staff, parents and visitors will prevent the spread of the virus

We have also published our COVID-19 Policy Statement on the school website.

Return Dates

In order to ease the children back to school and to give us time to explain the new routines to them the Board of Management proposes to bring **the Senior classes ONLY back to school on Wednesday 2nd September and the Junior classes ONLY on Thursday 3rd September, with all children in school on Friday 4th September.**

Senior Class teachers are: Orla Cunningham, Philip Grehan, Brenda Egan & Patricia Henry.

Junior Class teachers are: Marie Burke, Claire Fitzsimons, Áine O'Keefe & Roisín O'Sullivan.

Please phone 018380058 or text the school mobile 087 9444266 if you have a query.

Early Intervention
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Primary
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Post Primary
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Boarding
infoboarding@cidp.ie



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Class teachers and SNAs

Each Pupil will remain with their 2019/20 teachers for the 2020/21 school year. I would like to welcome Ms. Maire Burke to the Primary teaching team as our reception/junior infant class teacher. I would also like to welcome Ms. Ruth McSkane and Danielle O'Reilly who will join the Primary SNA team. I extend good wishes to Ms. Gillian Kennedy who has taken up a post in another school and Ms. Caroline Worthington who is on leave of absence this year.

Mrs Elizabeth McLafferty and Mr. Geoffrey McCormack will continue to act as the Primary Section Managers on alternative days.

Return to School Arrangements

We want to have school seem as "normal" as possible for our pupils when they return. In line with Department of Education & Skills guidelines, we will take a balanced and common-sense approach to create awareness about COVID-19 and to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school. The most relevant measures and messages are outlined below and will also be uploaded to our school website in coming days. As with all plans, these measures will be kept under continuous review and changes will be made as necessary.

General school measures

- **NO CHILD, STAFF MEMBER OR PARENT SHOULD ATTEND OUR SCHOOL IF UNWELL OR IF ANY MEMBERS OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD ARE UNWELL WITH SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH COVID-19.**
- Visitors to our school building will be limited to **essential visits only** and should be made by prior arrangement.
- Parents wishing to collect their child for an appointment should contact the office prior to arrival at the school, either by text on 089 436 0365 or email primary@holyfamilydeafschool.ie
- Sanitising stations will be available at school entry/exit points and in all classrooms.
- **We have bought bum bags for each child so pupil should bring their own small bottle of sanitiser e.g. you can also send a small packet of tissues to be put in the bum bag.**
- School will be cleaned every day in line with public health recommendations.
- Guidelines around social distancing of 2m between adults, hand hygiene and correct cough etiquette should be adhered to at all times.
- Up dates will be shared with parents through emails, school mobile and the school website to reduce paper sharing between school and home.



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- To avoid cash handling and potential spread of infection all payments should be made by via bank transfer. Please phone the school office 018380058 for assistance.

School Transport

Primary age pupils are not expected to adhere to social distance or wear masks on school transport, The Escort and driver will wear face coverings. The driver of your child's bus service will contact you with more information. If you choose to ask your child to wear a mask or visor then pupils **must** put the mask/face covering they wear on school transport into a sealable/zip-lock bag and keep it in their bag until they leave the school building at the end of the day. Face coverings worn on school transport must not be worn in school.

Arrival to school

Our aim is to avoid groups of children and/or adults at the school door.

- Pupils travelling on school transport should remain in the car/bus until the gates are open at **9a.m.**
- Liz/Geoffrey will indicate to bus escorts/parents when to bring the children to the 2m mark.
- **Pupils only** should enter the school building and go directly to their classrooms?
- **The front entrance will be clearly marked and supervised.**
- These routes will be shown to pupils in the videos to be shared prior to re-opening and we will practice the routine on their first day back to school

End of the school Day

In order to avoid large congregations of parents/Bus Escorts at collection times, we will need to implement staggered collection arrangements. They are as follows

02:30	Teachers/SNAs will bring the children to the pathway where the escort/parent will collect them. We will have a bank of umbrellas for wet days.
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To allow for regular cleaning of school uniforms, we ask that pupils in all classes wear their uniform as follows:

- **Mon/Wed/Fri:** school tracksuit
- **Tues/Thurs:** school uniform



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While we would like that all children wear a school outfit every day, we understand that it is not always possible, so children may wear their own clothes occasionally.

Hand Hygiene

As parents, we ask you to emphasise the importance of hand hygiene and cough etiquette with your child(ren). **We ask that all pupils wash their hands at home before coming to school.**

Pupils will be asked to sanitise their hands at the following times during the day:

- On arrival at school
- Before eating or drinking
- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When their hands are physically dirty (look dirty)
- When they cough or sneeze.

In the classroom

We believe it is very important that classrooms should look and feel similar for our pupils upon their return. Group work will be undertaken along with play in infant classes and collaborative learning in older classes. Pupils will be given opportunity to socialise with their classmates and learn from each other. We will, however, take the following precautions:

- Contact between class groups (bubbles) will be kept to a minimum.
- Within each class, pupils will be grouped in pods. Sharing of resources between pods will be kept to a minimum. *Delete if this is not happening...*
- Pupils' belongings will be stored in a basket beside their desk. Only necessary items - workbooks, copies, etc. - will be stored here.
- Coats, gloves, etc. should be kept to a minimum and will be hung up all day, to limit contact as much as possible.
- Shared resources such as tablets, laptops, etc. will be cleaned after use.
- Until we have settled back to school, **No books/copies will be sent home for homework initially** at least and so children will not need a schoolbag. They will only bring a packed lunch and if needed a breakfast.



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Masks/Social Distancing.

Young children (Junior infants to 2nd class) will not be expected to remain socially distanced from each other or the adults caring for them. Senior pupils will be assisted to observe a social distance of 1 metre. Primary aged pupils are not required to wear masks. Teachers and SNAs will wear visors approved by the Deaf Community and Chime.

Breaktimes

To minimise the amount of pupils in the yard at any time, we will have a split breaktime routine.

- Pupils from junior classes and senior classes will take their breaks separately with sections of yard area allocated to each class grouping.
- Junior class times: 10.45 - 11.00.m. and 12.40 - 1 p.m.
- Senior class breaktimes: 11am - 11.15 and 1pm - 1.20pm

Curriculum and Learning

As per Department guidelines, we will:

- spend time at the beginning of the year assessing pupils' progress and revisiting content from before and during the school closure;
- prioritise teaching and learning in English and Mathematics in the initial weeks of term
- emphasise and give greater time and attention to Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Physical Education (PE).

Illness

- As already stated, **NO CHILD, STAFF MEMBER OR PARENT SHOULD ATTEND OUR SCHOOL IF UNWELL OR IF ANY MEMBERS OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD ARE UNWELL WITH SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH COVID-19.**
- **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>

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- If a pupil develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the school day, they will be brought immediately to a designated isolation area with a staff member. Parents will be contacted immediately to bring them home and seek further medical advice as necessary.
- If a pupil has been advised by a doctor to isolate, parents should contact the school.

Videos

We are creating class videos for pupils to help allay any fears they may have about the return to school. These videos will bring them (and you) through the school day - arriving at school, classrooms, breaktimes and going home time. I am confident that our pupils will ease seamlessly back into the school routine and we will all do our very best to ensure that the transition is as easy as possible for them.

SUMMER WORK

We have made great efforts over the Summer months to have the school welcoming and ready for the pupils. Andy, our caretaker, has been very busy painting and maintaining the school grounds. A new fire safety system is being installed and the building is now fully compliant with fire safety regulations. The work is scheduled to be completed by Friday 28th August. A full deep clean will be carried out after this date.

We Are in This Together

As we face this task of re-opening our school in a safe and sustainable way, I thank you all for your co-operation with these measures. Our main priority is the health and safety of everybody in our school community and we believe that these measures will work towards ensuring that. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the school at the above numbers or by email: primary@holyfamilydeafschoo.l.ie or info@holyfamilydeafschoo.l.ie

Please note procedures put in place will be reviewed on an on-going basis and as updated advice is published by the Department of Education and Skills

An ISL translation of this letter is available on our website together with ISL Covid related signs.

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I hope you all enjoy the final days of the summer break.

Yours sincerely,

Eimear O'Rourke M.Ed
Principal