



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

21st August 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I hope you and your family are safe and well.

We are looking forward to welcoming our youngest pupils back on the first week of September and we cannot wait to see our Early Intervention alive again with joyful and energetic children who long to be re-united with their friends and our staff.

A Safe Return to School

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.

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.**
- **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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Primary
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Post Primary
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Boarding
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As a precaution please take a temperature check of your child before they leave for school and text us on the **Early Intervention School Mobile - 087 351 6841** that their temperature is normal each morning. Your body's normal temperature is between 36 and 36.8 degrees Celsius. A high temperature or fever, for most people, is when your body temperature is 38C or higher.

- 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.
- Sanitising stations will be available at school entry/exit points and in all classrooms.
- 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.
- Updates will be shared with parents through emails, school mobile and the school website to reduce paper sharing between school and home.
- 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.

Return Dates

There will be a phased opening for children who are commencing with us for the first time in Early Intervention 1 starting from Thursday 3rd September. This will enable a parent to accompany their child for an hour on a specific morning in order to introduce their child to their new learning environment. This will help them to adjust and feel safe and secure with us in Early Intervention. Ms. Ger Lewis will contact you with a time.

All the other children will commence on Wednesday 2nd September 2020.

Please note that the Early Intervention school day commences at 9am and finishes at 1.40pm.

Class teachers and SNAs

Ms. Geraldine Lewis will teach the reception class. Ms. Aidin Ní Mhaonaigh is currently on temporary leave so Mr Liam Phelan will teach the Senior group. I would like to welcome Ms. Alison Nolan who will join the EI SNA team.

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Arrival and Departure from the school

SNA's will collect all children from their bus or taxi in the morning on arrival. SNA's will escort children to their bus or taxi at the end of the day. Parents arriving with their child should wait until the entrance is free before accompanying their child to the front door.

School Transport

Young children are not expected to adhere to social distance or wear masks on school transport. Although pupils in special Schools are exempt, we are asking our Post Primary pupils on school transport to wear visors. The Escort and driver will also wear face coverings. The driver of your child's bus service will contact you with more information.

Well Being

It is important that you talk to your child to support them to prepare for the transition from home. Chat to your child about what might be different about the setting, such as drop off or collection and lots of handwashing. Also, explain to them what will be the same such as playing indoors and outdoors, reading stories, doing art projects, dressing up, music and exploring nature. More information on supporting your child's transition is available on the Gov.ie website

<https://first5.gov.ie/practitioners/reopening>

Masks/Social Distancing in School

Young children will not be expected to remain socially distanced from each other or the adults caring for them. Neither will they be expected to wear masks. Teachers and SNAs will wear visors.

Clean clothes

Please ensure that your child comes to school in freshly clean clothes on a daily basis. Please send in a change of clothes which will be kept on site.

Hand Hygiene

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

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Our children will be assisted 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 will focus on the following in particular:

- hand-washing and ensuring that children learn good hand-washing techniques
 - respiratory hygiene and ensuring that children learn good techniques
 - ensuring good cleaning procedures in settings
 - washing toys regularly
- (NB Children must not bring their own toys from home)**
- spending more time outside with the children
 - Pupils' belongings will be stored in their own small compartment. Only necessary items such as lunch, change of clothes and home-school language books will be stored here.
 - Coats, gloves, etc. should be kept to a minimum and will be kept in pupil's compartment to limit contact as much as possible.
 - Shared resources such as tablets, laptops, etc. will be cleaned after use.

Break times

There are currently 10 children enrolled in Early Intervention and break times will be as follows:

1st break - 10.45

2nd break - 12.30

Playground equipment will be disinfected and cleaned daily.



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Curriculum and Learning

We are guided by the principles as laid out by the Department of Education publication Aistear (The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework).

Our methodologies encompass a structured and unstructured generalisation and multisensory approach. Our primary goal is the development of social and functional language to communicate with others.

Audiology

Audiology support will continue to be provided to all students following all necessary safety measures. Please ensure that your son/daughter arrives at school with working hearing aid/cochlear implant and other assistive technology (FM system) if applicable. Parents should send spare hearing aid/cochlear implant batteries. As always assistance will be provided to children when required. Spare batteries are available in school as usual at a cost of 50 cent per battery.

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.**
- If a child 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 child has been advised by a doctor to isolate, parents should contact the school.

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

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work towards ensuring that. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the school by email:

earlyintervention@holyfamilydeafschool.ie or info@holyfamilydeafschool.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.

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

Yours sincerely,

Eimear O'Rourke M.Ed
Principal