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August 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you are all looking forward to children returning to school at the end of this month. We are busily preparing for their return and are looking forward to seeing all our pupils back in the classroom once more.

We are still on target to re-open the school on Friday August 28<sup>th</sup> for all pupils. Opening and closing times will remain the same as last year. Staggered drop-off and collection times for children will not be implemented as our pupil numbers are manageable. However arrangements around safety issues at these times will be given to parents as part of our school re-opening plan before the end of this week. We ask for your cooperation and patience as we navigate these new arrangements.

I have also had some queries about the wearing of school uniforms this year at school. We have received no guidelines from the Department of Education to date, regarding any public health advice surrounding the safety of wearing of uniforms. Therefore all children will wear the school uniform and rotate with the school tracksuit on alternate days.

The Board of Management is using DES funding to deep clean the school prior to the beginning of the new school year. There will also be an enhanced daily cleaning regime in place. Sanitiser, soap and hand towels will be readily available to all pupils so that they may practise good hand hygiene habits. Children will be kept in their class groups throughout the school day and all classrooms will be well-ventilated to ensure proper air-flow. Break times will occur as normal and arrangements will be in place to keep class groups separate from each other in the playground.

We are still in the midst of a global pandemic, however a certain degree of fatigue and complacency has now begun to emerge in society. We as a Board of Management and Staff are committed to keeping your children as safe as possible in school and ask that you support us in our endeavours to do so. There is no doubt that many children will feel anxious about the return to school. We plan to promote positive behaviours around hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and social distancing, without adding undue anxiety and ask that you prepare your child for their return to school by promoting such behaviours at every opportunity. Staff members will also be wearing face coverings such as masks and/or visors in the school and children should be prepared for this.

We all have a part to play in keeping Covid-19 out of our school community and therefore our school re-opening plan will detail to parents the situations where your children should not attend school and the

steps which will be taken if your child becomes ill at school. We realise that this may be inconvenient at times as we struggle to tell the difference between minor colds and Covid-19, however I appeal to you to err on the side of caution in order to protect vulnerable pupils, staff members and family/friends in our community.

When you receive the school re-opening plan this week, please read it carefully and familiarise yourself with our preventative measures. It is of the utmost importance that childminders and/or family members are also well-versed around our procedures for drop-off, collection and visitors to the school.

School life will be different this year for both pupils and staff, but it is essential that we work together to keep our schools open in the midst of the pandemic so that children have the opportunity to learn and grow in their school environment.

Looking forward to seeing you all again soon

*Noreen Duggan*

On behalf of the BOM and Staff