



17/08/2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope that you and your families are well and have managed to have some rest over the summer break. The staff are looking forward to the children's return to school very soon and getting back to some sort of normality.

The dates for returning to school for a transition week detailed in the letter sent on June 29 still apply. I believe that a staggered start for the children will allow us to get used to the new arrangements and procedures to ensure the safety of the children, staff and wider community and give us time to amend them if necessary. However, if you have arranged a family holiday during the week beginning Aug 24<sup>th</sup> then we will understand why your child is not at school.

It is essential that children are reminded of the importance of good hygiene. Please ensure that they know how to wash their hands properly for 20 seconds and that they are familiar with using hand sanitiser also. We would also appreciate if you can remind them to cough/sneeze into their elbow if they do not have a tissue. We will be going over these routines in school too, but it will be more effective if the children hear the same message at home and at school.

The latest advice from DE has relaxed strict social distancing requirements for children. Therefore, all classes will now be in their usual room with no overspilling into other spaces. Each class will "act as a single consistent bubble with minimal prolonged interaction with other classes". Social distancing requirements for adults still remain and we ask that parents keep this in mind when interacting with staff and when dropping off and collecting children.

Messages for teachers should be sent through the ClassDojo. Teachers will endeavour to check their Dojo before school starts every day, but cannot guarantee an immediate response. They will not be routinely checking their Dojo during teaching time.

Please ensure that you make firm afterschool arrangements with older children who walk home from school on their own. Occasionally the office staff are asked to give messages to children regarding where to go afterschool. This will not be possible in current circumstances, except in an emergency.

Children (and staff) who have **any symptoms** associated with Covid 19 must **not** attend school, as advised by the Public Health Agency (PHA). Children who live with someone who has symptoms associated with Covid 19 must also stay at home, as advised by the PHA. These symptoms include a new, continuous cough or a high temperature/fever or anosmia (a loss or a change in your normal sense of smell, which can also affect your sense of taste). We have been asked to '**vigorously implement**' this guidance. Therefore, even if your child has a raised temperature which is controlled with paracetamol or ibuprofen, they cannot return to school

until you have followed PHA advice under the Test, Trace and Protect programme. This advice may be to isolate for 10/14 days and/or to be tested for Covid 19. Information on Covid testing is available at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-and-contact-tracing>

If a child (or a member of staff) becomes unwell in school, they and any members of their household will be sent home, and parents will be advised to follow the PHA guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.

To allow all children back to school full time, we will have to implement some changes to our routines for the safety of pupils, parents and staff. The new routines are based on Department of Education (DE) and Public Health Agency (PHA) advice and guidelines. These changes will be subject to regular review and may be added to or relaxed as the term progresses.

- **All children should wash their hands thoroughly just before they leave for school in the morning. They will also be offered sanitiser as they enter the school.**
- No Breakfast Club, 123 Club or afterschool activities are currently planned. This will be reviewed in mid September.
- P3 children will finish at 2pm every day.
- Children can wear either their full school uniform or their PE uniform. It is recommended that they have a freshly washed uniform everyday.
- No schoolbags should be brought to school.
- To ease congestion in the morning we ask for your cooperation with a staggered arrival. Children with surnames beginning with A to L should arrive between 8.45am and 9am. All other children should arrive between 9am and 9.15am.
- **Children, other than those in P1 and P2, should be dropped off at the gate and go straight to their classrooms in the morning, to avoid large crowds congregating in the playground. If this causes anxiety for some children, we will be flexible.**
- Parents must **not** routinely enter the school building without a prior appointment.
- Parents who wish to speak to their child's teacher must arrange this through ClassDojo or by telephoning the office.
- All children from P2-P7 should bring the following stationery items to school so that children do not have to share resources. **Please label these items with your child's name** - HB pencils x 2, rubber, sharpener, Pritt stick, small ruler, small set of colouring pencils, whiteboard marker x 2 and tissues. If you have difficulties getting any of these items, we will supply your child with the item, but wouldn't have enough for each child. **If you have a clear plastic pencil case, please send the items in this but if you don't have one, we will supply a clear plastic wallet for each child.**
- Our usual healthy break policy still applies. Please send it in disposable wrappings. Your child may bring a bottle of still water to school with them.
- The EA School Meals Service will supply a packed lunch to children on Free School Meals **from Sept 1<sup>st</sup>**. All children will eat in their classrooms to facilitate 'protective bubbles'. Healthy lunches should be sent to school in disposable packaging. All children must bring a lunch from Aug 24-28.

- Homework will be set through ClassDojo and/or Google Classroom. Worksheets may also be sent home.
- Break and lunch times will be staggered so that fewer children are in the playground at any one time. The large playground will be zoned when there is more than one class using it at the same time, to ensure that 'protective bubbles' are maintained.
- The playground is very congested at 2pm on Fridays so the following arrangements will, hopefully, help ease this. If your eldest child(ren) is in P1 or P2 please collect them between 1.40-1.50pm. If your eldest child(ren) is in P3 or P4 please collect **all** of your children between 1.50-2pm. If your eldest child is in KS2 please collect **all** of your child(ren) between 2- 2.10pm.
- Please maintain social distance in the playground when waiting to collect your child after school and leave the playground as soon as you have collected them. Roses will be stencilled 2m apart in congested areas to encourage this. Parents of older children may want to arrange to meet them away from the school, perhaps at the library or a local shop.
- Adult visitors to the school (by prior appointment only) should wear a mask/face covering, unless exempt.

### **Starting Dates**

The following phased return during our transition week will help us ensure a safe and smooth start to the year.

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Aug:** P3, P6 and P7 -all finishing at noon. Usual start and finish times for the rest of the week.

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Aug:** P5 -in until 3pm. Usual start and finish times for the rest of the week.

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> Aug:** P2 and P4 –in until 3pm. Usual start and finish times for the rest of the week.

**Monday 31<sup>st</sup> Aug:** School closed for the bank holiday.

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> Sept:** P2-7 children all in school -usual start and finish times.

P1 children have their own individual starting dates in Sept. These were sent directly to P1 parents through ClassDojo or email.

**All children, including those entitled to Free School meals, must bring a healthy packed lunch during the week beginning Aug 24<sup>th</sup>, as no EA meals will be available that week.**

### **Other information**

Free School Meals (FSM) and Uniform Grant are available to parents in receipt of one of the following benefits: -

- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance;

- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less;
- Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year.

Apply online at <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants/apply-for-free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

The building work is continuing in the canteen. We are also having the external decoration of the school upgraded and the rainwater goods replaced, as well as all of the single glazed windows being replaced with double glazing.

First Holy Communion will, hopefully, take place on Sat Sept 12<sup>th</sup>. Times will be confirmed as soon as possible. We will also be arranging a date for First Confession for our new P4s very soon. We will let parents know by text as soon as possible.

Many families borrowed textbooks over the last term. Your child should return them to their new class teacher on their first day back.

Flu Vaccine will be offered to all children in school on Thur Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>.

If you have changed address or telephone number, please email the school to let us know the correct contact details. If your child has any new medical needs, please email the school to let us know. [info@stthereseoflisieux.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stthereseoflisieux.belfast.ni.sch.uk)

The updated holiday list will be available in September.

I know that some of you may be a little anxious about your children returning to school but please be assured that we will do everything we can to ensure the school is a safe environment for the children and the staff. However, we do need the support and cooperation of the whole school community to do this. We all have a responsibility to be vigilant and to follow PHA advice carefully.

Looking forward to seeing you all very soon.

Kind regards

S McTaggart  
Principal