

Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa Junior School

Bettystown, Co Meath A92 H762 Roll No: 20216L

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Principal – Maria White

Deputy Principal- Sarah Liddy

21st August 2020

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s),

I am writing to you again to update you further on arrangements for the planned reopening of the school for all pupils on 31st August.

Naturally, you will be anxious to have more detail about that planned reopening. While detailed planning had already taken place last May / June the government Roadmap for the Full Return to School did not issue until 27th July. Ensuring compliance with that roadmap has required, inter alia, the ordering of approved PPE, the installation of sanitising units in every classroom and in key locations throughout the school, the reconfiguration of classrooms, the marking out of social distancing points for drop off and collection, the marking of corridors and one way systems, the fitting out of Covid isolation areas, the removal / relocation of furniture that may cause congestion and the installation of Perspex screens where required.

Additionally, every school is required to undertake a Covid Risk Assessment and adopt a Covid 19 Safety Statement. All of this takes considerable time to plan carefully and meticulously to ensure that we have done the very best for the children in our care. Your children deserve no less.

The Board of Management approved the Covid Risk Assessment on 20th August and Policy Statement today, 21st August. These will be shared with you in due course. The Principal can now put in place the final arrangements for 31st August. Details of this reopening plan will be made available to you only when every single detail has been approved and agreed. It cannot be a question of rushing this process – it is imperative for your children, and the school staff, that we get this right.

Barring any change at national level, what you now need to know is that

- *Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa will welcome back (or, in the case of Junior Infants, for the first time) all children to full time education on 31st August*
- *The starting time each day will be as in previous years, there will be minor changes to stagger the finish time for Junior Infants and First class*
- *Arrangements have been made so that it will not be necessary to have a staggered drop off time in the morning*
- *The Board recognises that parents have always been vigilant in sending their children to school clean and properly dressed. The school uniform will be as indicated to you in June with no requirement for daily changes of uniform as suggested recently in some national papers*
- *In the interests of your child's, and every child's safety, children who display any Covid symptoms must not be sent to school and any child*

who develops symptoms at school will be taken to a secure area and monitored while arrangements are made for you to collect him/her

- *There will be no mixing of classes*
- *It is likely that the reopening plan will change and adjust as we assess and evaluate how the plan is working in the best interests of our children and staff*

Parents will have additional obligations this year in the interests of national safety.

- You must drop off and collect your child at the time and place which will issue to you from Ms White shortly
- You must not stay around the school grounds following drop off
- You must follow any revised protocols for entering the school building
- If your child has travelled abroad to a country not on the Green List he/she is required to restrict movement for 14 days on re-entering the country. That means that he/she cannot come to school during this period.
- If your child has been in direct contact with a person(s) who has returned from a country not on the Green List you should contact the school immediately for advice
- You must exercise your parental responsibility in ensuring that your child does not attend school if displaying any Covid 19 symptoms
- You should prepare your child as best you can for the changed environment in schools

We want all our children to feel happy and safe in school. You can help your child by teaching him/her how to correctly wash hands and explaining correct respiratory etiquette. You may like to talk to him/her about the fact that school may look a little different and that staff will be wearing a face covering. However, I suggest that you place great emphasis on the fun of meeting friends and staff again and avoid any talk of 'safety' which may have the opposite effect and only make a child anxious.

August 31st will be a momentous day for the children and staff of Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa. Your children will be in very safe and caring hands. Their physical safety and mental and emotional wellbeing, coupled with access to a first class experience of education are, as they have always been, the top priorities of the staff and Board of Management of the school.

On behalf of the Board of Management I want to thank Ms White, Ms Liddy and other members of staff and the Board who have put enormous time, care and energy into preparing the school for reopening. We are indebted to all of them for their determination to reopen Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa as safe and happy environment for all the children.

You will hear again shortly from Ms White, Principal with additional detail.

Yours sincerely,

Miriam Marsh

Chairperson, Board of Management