

Greaghrahan NS, Staghall, Belturbet, Co. Cavan H14CH74

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www.greaghrahanschool.ie

Return to School – 31st August 2021

Please visit the school website for information videos for pupils and families on the latest government advice on the return to school.

Board of Management

Infection Control Measures in place for the Safe Return of pupils and staff:

- Signage relating to Covid 19 in place throughout the school.
- Systems are in place for children to keep their own personal items at their table: books, copies, pens and pencils, scissors, glues, lunchboxes, drinks bottles etc.
- Non-touch waste bins are available in each classroom
- An isolation area is available for children to be supervised in while waiting for collection if displaying Covid-19 symptoms during school hours.
- Hand sanitising stations are located at all entry/exit points, in each classroom
- Hand dryers and paper towels are available in classrooms and bathrooms.
- Appropriate school PPE is available.
- The school has been thoroughly cleaned in preparation for reopening.
- Increase in cleaner's hours introduced last year will continue and the school will be cleaned and surfaces disinfected each evening
- Portable perspex screens are available for use by staff where necessary.
- CO2 monitors provided by the DES will be used to check air quality in the classrooms.

Entering and Exiting the School

We would like to remind you of the following drop-off and collection routines for the safe delivery and collection of pupils from school.

All children should arrive **between** 8.50 - 9.00a.m. Children should not be on school grounds before 8.50a.m. as they are not insured and it results in congregations of pupils and parents at the school gate, thereby increasing the risk of transmission of the virus. For evening collections, pupils should proceed directly to their cars.

- Each classroom will enter and exit the school using separate doors and entry gates.
- **Junior and Senior Infants** will enter the school grounds through the gate nearest their classroom and enter and exit the school by the external door to their classroom
- **First, Second and Third** class children will enter the school grounds through the middle gate and enter and exit the school by the front door.

- **Fourth, Fifth and Sixth** class will enter the school yard through the gate near the car park and enter and exit the school by the back door.
- Parents of **Junior Infants** will be permitted to accompany their child into their classroom **for the first week only**. Parents are required to wear a mask and maintain social distancing on these mornings. The school day will finish at **12 noon for the first week** for Junior Infants and 1.30pm thereafter.
- We wish to ensure that there is no congregation of adults or pupils at the school gates. Parents/ Guardians/ Carers will be asked to socially distance at the school gate and to leave promptly once they have ensured that their child is safely dropped off/collected.
- The end of the school day will be as follows:
Junior Room – 1.30pm
Middle Room – 2.30pm
Senior Room – 2.35pm

Accessing the School

- Access to the school will continue to be restricted. **No adults, other than staff members, are permitted beyond the school gate, without prior arrangement.** A Contact Tracing Log Record will be kept for anybody entering the school premises.
- There will be no admittance for parents/guardians beyond the school gate at any time without prior arrangement.

Early Pick-Up

- If a child has to be collected during the course of the school day, please notify the school in advance by telephone. On reaching the school, ring the bell but please remain outside the door and the child will be brought to you. The date and time of pick-up will be recorded by staff.

Forgotten Items

- Parents/guardians who are dropping off forgotten items i.e. school bags, lunches into school during the day must phone beforehand to arrange drop off. A box will be placed outside the front door for this purpose. Ring the class bell on arrival to alert the teacher and the item will be collected at the earliest opportunity.

Communicating with Staff

- We ask that parents please don't approach staff to speak with them face to face but instead contact them by phone or via the school email office@greagrahanschool.ie. Where possible, please make contact when the secretary is available each morning (except Wednesday) from 9a.m to 12p.m. Outside of these times, if you leave a phone message or email, staff will get back to you as soon as possible.
- In order to decrease physical interaction, teachers will communicate with parents on the phone where possible rather than in face to face meetings. Where necessary, meetings

with teachers will be by appointment only and will be facilitated in a way that observes social distancing requirements.

Seating and Social Distancing

Seating arrangements for the children will continue as during the past school year. The children in a classroom and their teacher will form a class bubble. Children from one classroom will not mix with children from another classroom from their arrival at school in the morning until they go home at the end of the school day.

Children in Junior Infants to Second class

- Classes will be grouped into pods (small groups of 4 or 5) and there will be at least 1 metre distance between each pod.

Children in Third to Sixth class

- Children in 3^d to 6^h Class will also be in pods of 3 or 4 with 1 metre distance between each person and at least 1 metre between pods.
- In all classes the children will be instructed to stay in their indoor pods while in the classroom and not to engage with other pods.

Break Times

- The children can play with other children from their own classroom that aren't in their pod at break times when outside on the yard, but they cannot mix with children from other classrooms. Because we have lots of outdoor space, break times will not be staggered. Instead each classroom will enter and exit the yard through different doors and they will be assigned separate play areas. The yard will be supervised by two members of staff to ensure children remain in these designated areas.
- Unless the weather is very bad, the children will be going outside for break times. It is important they spend time in the fresh air and it allows the rooms to be fully ventilated. The children will also participate in a daily walk. It is important that children dress appropriately for the weather with a hooded coat/raincoat, hat etc.
- On very wet days, if the children need to stay indoors at break time, each child will remain in their pod within their classroom.
- Each classroom will have access to separate sets of equipment at break times.

Personal Equipment

- All children must have their own equipment-pencils, rubbers etc. Pencil cases must remain in school to avoid cross contamination.
- Children's personal belongings should be clearly marked with the child's name.
- Please ensure that your child can manage their own lunch box, drink's bottle, coat and shoes. If your child cannot tie his or her own laces, please provide velcro or buckle shoes. We would also ask that children are as competent as possible in independently putting on and taking off their coats.

- Children are not permitted to bring toys or any sports equipment to school during the present restrictions.

Uniforms

- Children are required to wear their uniform every day.
- If a uniform is to be worn on consecutive days, it should be changed on arriving home from school.
- Regular washing of uniform should take place especially if it is visibly soiled.
- Navy tracksuits may be worn on alternate days or when necessary.

Special Education

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal of children from class.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children receive support in the Special Education Teacher's room, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in the SET room will be wiped clean and disinfected in between groups attending.

Home work

There will be no home work given on the first week back to school. Thereafter your child will be assigned home work on Mondays to be completed and returned on Friday.

Shared Equipment

- Concrete learning materials/toys will be considered as possible sources of infection. Only those school toys and resources which can be cleaned will be used.
- Where possible, children will be given their own sets of concrete learning materials during the learning of a concept or skill.
- If children need to share resources/toys they will only be permitted to share them with children within their own pod.
- All classroom equipment and resources will be quarantined or sanitised before they are used by children from a different pod.
- Art equipment will be individual where possible, but if not, only shared by children within a pod.
- iPads will be wiped down before and after use.
- Children will be encouraged to choose a library book to have in their personal storage container. When they finish a book, it will be left for 72 hours before being used by another child.

Lunch

- Children should have their lunch in a plastic box that is easily washed. Disposable packaging is also acceptable.
- Lunches should be prepared so that younger children can manage their packaging and food independently i.e. fruit should be pre-cut, manageable yogurt containers etc.

- Sharing of lunches is not permitted

Handwashing and sanitiser

The school will be following HSE guidelines regarding regular handwashing and the use of sanitiser. We will be encouraging the children to practise good hand hygiene.

There will be hand sanitiser dispensers available in the following locations:

- Each entry/exit point in the school
- In each classroom

Children will be asked to wash or sanitise their hands at regular intervals throughout the day.

- upon entry to the classroom
- before eating
- coming in from playing outside
- following sneezing coughing etc.

Cleaning

In line with public health advice, enhanced cleaning regimes will continue in the school. Tables, chairs and frequently touched areas will be cleaned regularly.

Ventilation

The DES has outlined an approach to be used in schools to maximise ventilation. Windows and doors will be fully open during break times and windows will be partially open when the room is in use. The DES has funded the provision of CO2 monitors to check the air quality in the classrooms. Further information on ventilation in schools can be found at the following link <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools/>

Masks/ Face Coverings

Public health advises that primary school children are not required to wear masks or face coverings. They may be provided with a mask if they are presenting with any Covid-19 related symptoms. In this instance, he or she may be asked to wear a mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.

If as a parent/guardian, you are more at ease with your child wearing a face mask, then we are happy for your child to do so. However, if the child chooses to remove the face covering, it will not be the responsibility of the teacher to insist that it be replaced.

School staff will continue to wear face coverings/visors when they are unable to maintain a 2m distance from other adults or students.

We will continue to keep up to date with Public Health Advice and we will change our plans and practices as needed. We will keep you informed of any changes.

Children who should not attend school

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school if they –

- have a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more.
- have any other common symptoms of Covid 19 – a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath or an existing breathing condition that has recently become worse.
- have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid 19.
- have been living with someone who is unwell and may have Covid 19.
- have diarrhoea.
- have returned from another country in the last 14 days. For the latest advice visit [https:// www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel_and_recreation/travel_to_ireland/](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel_and_recreation/travel_to_ireland/)

Symptoms of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The advice to schools is that **no one**, adult or child should attend school if they are showing signs of **any** symptoms which might be associated with the virus.

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- **a fever**- high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above
- **a cough** - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- **shortness of breath or breathing difficulties**
- **loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and pains

Other uncommon symptoms include:

- Sore throat
- Headaches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Feeling sick or vomiting

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu. If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test. Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE website at the following link [https:// www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html).

Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE website is advised. If you do not have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 test at a COVID-19 walk-in test centre.

Isolation quick guide for parents and guardians of children older than 3 months and up to 13 years of age is a useful up to date resource to help guide parents on the decision to take in different situations. It is available [here](#).

Children who become unwell while at school

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 the following are the procedures to be implemented, as per the Department's publication 'Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19: Covid-19 response plan for safe reopening of primary schools.'

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/59843-dealing-with-a-suspected-case-of-covid-19/>

- The child should be collected from the school (**Please make sure you are contactable throughout the day and that the additional contact numbers supplied to the school are up to date. Please have arrangements made so that your child can be collected promptly from the school if they are displaying symptoms**)
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.
- A mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms. He or she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, until they can be collected. Parents/guardians will be advised to inform their GP by phone of their child's symptoms.
- The child presenting with symptoms will be provided with disposable tissues and will be advised to cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided. The pupil should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved once the symptomatic child has left the school premises.
- If a staff member displays symptoms of Covid 19, they will leave the school as per guidelines.

If your child is a close contact of Covid 19 in school

If your child has been in close contact with someone else who has COVID-19 in school or childcare, you will be contacted to bring your child home. The school will not share the name of the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

The HSE contact tracing team will arrange COVID-19 testing for your child and contact you with the details. Do not ring your GP, unless your child develops symptoms. The risk of your child becoming infected with COVID-19 from this close contact is low. Even if your child does become infected with the virus, most children don't get any symptoms. If they do get symptoms, they usually have a very mild illness.

Please see further HSE advice on what to do if your child is a close contact at school at the following link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/contact-tracing/child-is-a-close-contact-school/>

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation in supporting the infection control measures to keep our school community safe.

Paudge Tobin
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Anna Marie McGuire
Principal

