

Plan for the operation of St. Ita's N.S. during the 2021-2022 School Year

This plan is based on the advice received from the HSE and the Department of Education. We will review this plan on a regular basis to adapt, modify and make changes to the plan when necessary.

Please note that the measures put in place during the previous school year to make the school a safer place will be in operation. These include:

- ✓ Signage in school building and in yards.
- ✓ 52 hand sanitising stations located inside throughout the school.
- ✓ Extra cleaning and sanitising inside the school building by the school cleaner during the course of the school day.
- ✓ Investment in PPE such as liquid sanitiser, disinfectant, face coverings and protective screens.
- ✓ The creation of an isolation area for children presenting with Covid-19 symptoms.
- ✓ All classrooms are sanitised with fogging machine after school hours on a daily basis.
- ✓ Appointment of a Lead Worker Representative and Deputy Lead Worker Representative to be the contact point for staff and to liaise with principal regarding Covid – 19 issues relating to health and safety.
- ✓ All staff to complete a Return To Work form prior to returning to school.
- ✓ All staff to have induction training available to them as per the Department of Education current guidance.
- ✓ Make changes to the school or classroom layout if necessary.
- ✓ Update the school health and safety risk assessment.
- ✓ Make necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and keep a record of this
- ✓ During the coming school year there will be a greater emphasis on air quality and we hope to have a number of air quality monitoring units which will be provided by the Department of Education. These portable Carbon Dioxide monitors can provide a general indication as to whether the room is adequately ventilated or not and will inform our strategy in ventilating classrooms.
- ✓ School building – prior to opening the following to be undertaken
 - flushing of water system outlets,
 - Checking of school ventilation system
 - refuse bin collection

Our plan is guided by our Covid – 19 Policy Statement (dated 20/08/2021) which is attached to this document.

Physical Distancing in the school setting is a major part of our strategy to combat Covid – 19.

We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counter-productive focus on this issue.

Physical distancing will be achieved by increasing separation between pupils. This will involve the creation of bubbles and pods in classrooms.

Physical distancing will also be achieved by decreasing the interaction of children in different bubbles.

This will involve staggered school opening and staggered school finishing times as well as staggered breaks during the course of the school day.

Below you will find an outline of the plan for the return to school in September 2021:

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- When the children return to school all classes will have staggered starting times and staggered finishing times. There will be four separate starting and four finishing times. Classes will also have different break times and lunch times. Each class will operate within a self-contained system or zone. Each zone corresponds to a floor level. Each floor level has a number of classes, each class is a bubble and inside each class there are pods of pupils. A pod will usually consist of a group of four to six pupils. We have also created a number of split classes and class divisions in order to reduce the number of pupils in each class.
- We will operate three entrance points to the school. All classes on the ground floor (except Mr. Whelan's class) will enter through the brown door (Door A) from the school yard. Mr. Whelan's class will enter through the white door (Door B).

All pupils on the middle floor will enter through the white door (Door B) from the school yard and proceed directly up the stairs to their classrooms.

All pupils on the top floor will enter through the gates to the astro grass yard. They will enter the school through the door (Door C) off this yard and proceed directly up the stairs to their classrooms.

In this way we have created three self-contained zones whereby the pupils will not interact while in school. This will allow for social distancing at the entrance and for the free movement of pupils in and out of school.
- Each class will have two breaks in the yard, totalling forty minutes, to allow plenty of time for play and fresh air.
- In each class from 3rd to 6th, the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods.
- A 2-metre distance will be observed by the class teacher, where possible. Teachers will wear face coverings where the 2-metre distance cannot be observed.
- Where a Special Needs Assistant is supporting a child, she will wear a face covering when she is sitting beside or near the child.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry/exit points, outside and inside all class and support rooms and in the isolation room. The pupils will receive refresher training in hand washing and cough and sneeze etiquette every day in the first weeks back at school.

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Entry times and exits times for each class:

Please take note of your child's entrance and exit points and your child's starting and finishing times.

Three Zones:

Ground Floor		Middle Floor		Top Floor	
Ms. Cleary, J.I.1	Room 2	Ms. Geraghty, S.I.2	Room 10	Ms. Mahony, 1 st & 2 nd	Room 18
Ms. McDonagh, J. I.2	Room 5	Ms. Walsh, S.I.3 & 1 st	Room 9	Ms. O' Brien, 3 rd	Room 15
Ms. F. Mitchell, J.I.3	Room 6	Mrs. Glynn, 2 nd	Room 8	Ms. S. Mitchell, 4 th	Room 16
Mr. Whelan, S.I.1	Room 1	Ms. Cormican, 5 th	Room 11	Ms. Mannion, 6 th	Room 17
Ms. Ruane, 4 th	Room 21				

Zone	Teacher	Entrance	Start Time	Finish Time
Ground Floor	Ms. Cleary	Brown Door (A)	8.50am	1.30pm
Ground Floor	Ms. F. Mitchell	Brown Door (A)	9.00am	1.40pm
Ground Floor	Ms. McDonagh	Brown Door (A)	9.10am	1.50pm
Ground Floor	Ms. Ruane	Brown Door (A)	9.20am	3.00pm
Ground Floor	Mr. F. Whelan	White Door (B)	9.00am	1.40pm
Middle Floor	Ms. Geraghty	White Door (B)	8.50am	1.30pm
Middle Floor	Ms. Walsh	White Door (B)	9.00am	1.40pm & 2.40pm
Middle Floor	Ms. Cormican	White Door (B)	9.10am	2.50pm
Middle Floor	Ms. J. Glynn	White Door (B)	9.20am	3.00pm
Top Floor	Ms. O' Brien	Door off Astro Grass Yard (C)	8.50am	2.30pm
Top Floor	Ms. S. Mitchell	Door off Astro Grass Yard (C)	9.00am	2.40pm
Top Floor	Ms. Mahony	Door off Astro Grass Yard (C)	9.10am	2.50pm
Top Floor	Ms. Mannion	Door off Astro Grass Yard (C)	9.20am	3.00pm

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Arrival at School

New junior infant pupils and their parents will receive an opportunity to visit the school, meet their teacher and see their classroom in late August.

The following special arrangements for Junior Infants will operate from Wednesday, 1st September to Friday, 10th September only. Please see these special arrangements below.

Ms. Cleary's Class Room 2
Arrive at 8.50 am and finish at 11.30 am

Ms. F. Mitchell's Class Room 6
Arrive at 9.00 am and finish at 11.40 am

Ms. McDonagh's Class Room 5.
Arrive at 9.10 am and leave at 11.50 am

For the rest of the classes there will be 4 starting and finishing times as outlined on page 3:
Please note the following procedures:

- Do not send your child too early to school as we cannot allow them into their class before their start time and we want to avoid large congregations at the school gate. If you are early, please wait away from the entrance or in the car, if driving.
- Allowance will be made for siblings who start at different times. Teachers will be available to supervise **siblings only** in their respective classrooms.
- Staff members will receive the children at the school entrances and direct them to their entry point.
- **Only Junior and Senior Infant parents will be allowed into the yard**, one parent per child. Please prepare your child for this. Parents of pupils in Junior and Senior Infants will walk their children into the main yard and towards their entrance door. Their class teacher will meet the children at the entrance door and take the children into their classroom.
- Parents/Carers of Junior and Senior Infants coming into the yard are asked to wear a face mask, to observe 2-metre social distancing and to allow for the free flow of pupils and parents arriving simultaneously.
- **Parents of pupils from First Class upwards** are not allowed on the grounds. Our restricted entrance does not allow for sufficient social distancing. Again, pupils will be supervised closely until they arrive at their room. They will become familiar with their route to their classroom within a few days.
- We ask for co-operation with these times as it will mean that the classes can start on time.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building.
- Messages for teachers, should the need arise, can be sent by email to the school or by phoning the school office (091841605).

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- **PLEASE NOTE:** This plan will apply no matter what the weather so, even on wet days, your child will go to his or her allocated entry door as usual. There will be no access to the school for all the children via Reception on wet days as was the practice prior to Covid-19.

End of School Day

When the school day is over, the following arrangements will apply:

1. **Junior and Senior Infants:** Adults, who are collecting their children from Junior and Senior Infants at the end of the day should wait in the assigned area in the yard. This will be shown to you on the first day back. Please ensure that anyone who is collecting your child is aware of this, for example, childminders, crèche personnel, relatives or friends. Please wear a mask and observe a 2-metre distance. Please do not linger in the school grounds when dropping children to school/ collecting children at the end of the day in order to follow social distancing rules.
2. **First Class and Second Class:** The class teacher will bring the children to the yard and will bring the children to the gate that the children entered through in the morning and release the children into the care of the adult who is there to collect them.
3. **3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Classes:** The class teacher will allow each pod to leave the classroom separately in order to minimise contact. The teacher will walk the children to the gate that the children entered through in the morning and the children will meet their parents **off the school grounds**.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents of pupils from 1st to 6th class cannot wait on the school grounds at the end of the school day as it would be impossible to maintain social distancing.

Collection of Children during the School Day

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- Parents/Guardians should inform the school in advance if, for a particular reason, they need to collect their child outside of normal school hours.
- When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the buzzer at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff.
- A member of staff will sign the child out.
- No adult should enter the school, unless invited to do so or by appointment.
- No collection of pupils during yard time.

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19 (Delta Variant)

Symptoms of Covid-19:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste
- Fatigue

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- Aches and pains

Uncommon symptoms include:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Runny/stuffy nose
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Diarrhoea

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures which will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- 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. In the event of more than one child presenting with symptoms of Covid -19, a number of different isolation areas will be used.
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. The child should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- The child presenting with symptoms will be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- An infra-red non-touch thermometer will be used to take the child's temperature. If the child's temperature is 38 degrees or higher, a call will be made to the parent/guardian so the child can immediately be brought home. **Parents must be aware that an appropriate adult must be available to bring the child home promptly.** Parents should call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed.

Children who should not attend school:

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

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the previous 14 days

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- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the previous 14 days
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad from countries not on the green list must self-isolate for a period of 14 days in line with public health guidance.
- Children who are generally unwell.

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school

If a child is not able to attend school, on account of approved medical reasons, for an extended period of time, suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with parents by the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant).

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

Child's Personal Equipment

- **Pencil Case:** Children from 1st to 6th Class will bring their pencil case to school and leave it in school.
- It is further requested that all items, where possible, should have the child's name on them for ease of identification.
- **Tissues:** All children should have a packet of tissues in their school bag. The teacher will also have tissues available.
- **Lunches:** All lunch containers should be washed at home every night. Please do the same with drink containers/ re-usable bottles. Children should be able to open their own drink bottles.
- **No toys or equipment** to be brought to school from home.

What to bring to school on Day 1

All Classes: School bag containing, lunch box, drink and tissues. All of their school books and all items on their booklist. All of these items will remain in school and pupils are allowed to bring their school bag to and from school on a daily basis.

School Books and Copies

- A safe system will operate for the management of books and copies within the classroom to avoid cross contamination.
- The class teacher will explain to the children how this will work within the classroom when the children return to school.

Shared Equipment

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- By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops, and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms.
- Under the supervision of the teacher, the cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

Break Time

- Each class will have two breaks outside so the children will have plenty of time for play and fresh air.
- Each class will have access to the yards during their allotted break times.
- Each class (bubble) will be assigned to a designated area on the yard and will play within it.

Learning Support

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of particular bubbles.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers will be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children from 3rd to 6th Class receive support in one of the SET rooms, when possible, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

Special Needs Assistants

- Due to the number of SNAs allocated to our school by the Department (access is not one-to-one), SNAs will be deployed across different bubbles within the school.
- When this occurs, all HSE guidelines will be followed.

Physical Education (P.E.)

- All PE classes will take place outdoors for the month of September, at least.

Homework

- There will be no homework until Monday 13th of September as pupils settle back into their school routines.

Extra-curricular Activities

- There will be no extra-curricular activities, including Homework Club, after school.
- Further updates will be provided in late September.

Uniform

- We have decided that the children may wear the school uniform and school tracksuit on alternate days to facilitate and to maintain cleanliness.
- Teachers will inform pupils in their particular class as to which days PE will take place once school reopens.

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PPE

- PPE will be provided to all staff members. Staff are required to follow the latest guidelines from the Department of Education in relation to PPE.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

- In the event that teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class.
- If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes.

Curriculum and Wellbeing

- We will be following the advice as contained in 'Curriculum Guidance for Primary Schools: Teaching, Learning and Assessment 2021-2022' as published by the Department of Education, August 2021.
- There will be a focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Well-being (including physical well-being) for the first few weeks, in particular.

Signed: Monsignor Cathal Geraghty, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Patrick Coyle, Principal