

**Planned Re-opening of  
O'Brennan National School, Kielduff for  
Pupils, Staff & Parents/Guardians  
26<sup>th</sup> August 2020**



**Underlying Principles**

- The school has a responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated with that intention in mind.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

**School Profile**

O'Brennan National School is a co-educational primary school located in a rural setting. There are 11 teachers (7 mainstream and 4 S.E.T.) plus the principal. One of the S.E.T. positions is shared with two other schools. There are 5 Special Needs Assistants working in O'Brennan N.S. and a full time secretary.

Last school year 2019/20 there were 182 pupils attending our school. For the coming school year our projected enrolment is very similar (182 pupils) but this has yet to be confirmed.

The classrooms in our school are 60m squared. There are two toilets located with each classroom, one male and one female. There is a sink with hot water and soap in both toilets. There are also two sinks, both with hot water and soap located at the rear of each classroom.

**Key Terminology**

**Bubble:** A bubble is the class group, i.e. Junior Infants make up Ms. O'Brien's bubble, Senior Infants make up Mr. O'Neill's bubble, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class pupils make up Mrs. Corridon's bubble and so on.

**Pod:** Pods are small groups in which your child will be working in during the school day while in their bubble. Generally they will be made up of groups of 4 or 5 children.

### **Assumptions**

- O'Brennan National School will re-open on Wednesday August 26<sup>th</sup> 2020.
- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system.
- The day will include two breaks for each bubble and staff member.
- Within each bubble the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at the entry point and within each bubble. It will also be available in all support rooms, offices, isolation room, school hall, and at every entry and exit point from the school building.
- Children will arrive at school with clean washed hands each day in line with public health guidelines.
- Soap and hot water will also be readily available inside in each bubble.
- Effective hand washing techniques will be explicitly taught to each class bubble.
- Regular handwashing will be an inbuilt component of each bubble's school day.

### **Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines**

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

### **Junior Infants to Second Class**

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble.

### **Third Class to Sixth Class**

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per Pod (DES Guidelines). As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

### **Staggered Drop Off and Collection Times**

***To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk or cycle to school if it is at all possible.***

Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds at any time. To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not come onto the school grounds before the school doors open at 8.45 a.m.

***Separate, special arrangements will be put in place for our Junior Infants and their parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. Details of these arrangements will be conveyed directly to the families involved by the Principal and Class Teacher.***

### **Arrival in the Morning**

**O'Brennan National School will not be using a policy of staggering opening times with the exception of Junior Infants initially.**

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 8.45 a.m.

Parents are asked to comply completely with our 'drop and go system' in the car park any time between 8.45am and 9.00am. There is no contingency to provide supervision for children who may arrive before then. Children who arrive prior to 8.45am are not insured to be on the premises.

**The school staff and Board of Management request that parking in the car park should not take place under any circumstances between 8.45am and 9.00am. This is to allow for the smooth flow of traffic and to allow the classes to get in session on time. It will also minimise the risk of people congregating in the school grounds which is in breach of the Department of Education and Skills Guidelines.**

Children will go directly to their designated entry point where they will be met by a member of staff who will usher them to their classrooms on arrival. Staff members including Special Education Teachers, SNAs and the Principal will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to help them to their classrooms.

**Social Distancing is not a requirement from Junior Infants to Second Class as per the Department of Education and Skills guidelines for the safe re-opening of schools. With that in mind the school staff and the Board of Management have decided that the children will enter and exit the school building in the following way:**

- **Ms. O'Brien's, Mr. O'Neill's and Mrs. Corridon's bubbles** will enter via the main entrance. (PURPLE DOOR)
- **Ms. Brosnan's bubble** will enter at the GREEN DOOR
- **Ms. Broderick's bubble** will enter at the YELLOW DOOR
- **Ms. Buckley's bubble** will enter at the BLUE DOOR
- **Mr. Sheehy's bubble** will enter at the RED DOOR

- Parents are again asked to adhere completely to the drop and go system. Staff will help children move safely into the building and into their classrooms.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by school journal, Aladdin or directly via email to the teacher. Teachers will continue to use the email addresses that they set up during the lockdown period.

### **End of School Day**

- Adults who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should wait outside the school gate. We would encourage parents to wear a face covering and avoid congregating in large groups.
- Junior Infants will finish their school day at 12.00pm for weeks one and two of the new school year. They will be accompanied to their collection point at the front door at that time.

### **Infant Day**

The Infant day normally finishes at 1.40 pm. After the initial two week block at the beginning of the school year Junior Infants will leave via the main entrance at 1.35 pm. Senior Infants will leave via the main entrance at 1.40 pm.

Children who will be availing of our Infants After-Schools Club will be accompanied to the designated classroom and supervised. The children that are leaving the school building at 2.40pm will be escorted to their collection point via the main door. The children who will remain in the building for After Schools 3pm – 5.30pm will be accompanied to their designated area and supervised.

### **Full School Day**

The children who complete the full school day will exit the school building using the same door from where they entered (Colour Coded).

Mrs. Corridon's bubble will exit via main entrance at 2.25pm.

Classes upstairs will have to stagger their dismissal times so as to avoid the mixing of bubbles in close proximity on the stairs.

Ms. Brosnan's bubble will make their way downstairs using their designated stairwell to their designated exit point at 2.30pm.

Ms. Broderick's bubble will make their way downstairs using their designated stairwell to their designated exit point at 2.35pm.

Ms. Buckley's bubble will make their way downstairs using their designated stairwell to their designated exit point at 2.40pm.

Mr. Sheehy's bubble will make their way downstairs using their designated stairwell to their designated exit point at 2.45pm.

### **Bus times To be confirmed**

Children using the school bus will be asked to wait under supervision at a designated area within the school.

In the case of siblings who are completing the full school day and are being collected straight after school, **all children in that family will leave based on the dismissal time of the youngest sibling.** A list of such families and their dismissal times will be compiled for their teachers. The children will exit using their designated exit point. This is to minimise the risk of congregating.

### **Summary**

Staggered closing	
1:35	Juniors
1.40	Seniors
2.25	Mrs. Corridon
2:30	Ms. Brosnan
2:35	Ms. Broderick
2.40	Ms. Buckley
2.45	Mr. Sheehy

### **Uniforms and clothing:**

- There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families.
- We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms
- As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms **only for school related activities.** Uniforms should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school.
- We advise children to always have a coat with them. This is imperative as outdoor learning will likely be a vital aspect of this year.

### **Breaktimes:**

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

Break times will be split with two waves of breaks happening between 10.30am & 11.00am and 12.00pm & 1.00pm daily.

**Wave 1:** Ms. O'Brien, Mr. O'Neill, Ms. Buckley and Mr. Sheehy's bubbles.

10.30am - 10.40am and 12pm -12.30 pm.

**Wave 2:** Mrs. Corridon, Ms. Brosnan, Ms. Broderick's bubbles.  
10.50am - 11am and 12.30pm – 1.00pm.

Each bubble will have a colour coded designated play area for their break times. Each bubble will be given time to use the toilets before going on the yard for their break. **They will also be given time before and after they play on the yard to wash their hands.** They will use the toilets in their own classroom if required during their time on the yard. They will be accompanied by an adult to and from their classroom.

Bubbles will use their designated stairs and entry/exit point for going to and from the yard during break times each day.

### **Yard Supervision**

Staff will be divided into staff pods for break times.

A yard supervision rota will be decided upon by each staff pod based on the 'breaktime' schedule outlined in the previous paragraph.

It is the responsibility of each staff pod to ensure that there is adequate supervision on the yard at any one time.

Yards will be supervised by teachers, Special Education Teachers and SNA's working within those bubbles.

### **Staff Room**

Staff who are not supervising children on the yard can use the staff room. The staff room has been re-arranged in order to accommodate social distancing. Staff should allow enough time for cleaning surfaces and utensils in the staff room before the end of break time. It is the responsibility of each individual staff member to clean their own area.

A member of each pod will complete and sign a cleaning checklist after use of the staffroom. The standards of cleanliness and hygiene will be monitored by the Lead Worker Representative and the Deputy Lead Worker Representative. They will also ensure that each staff pod completes the cleaning checklist each day. At the end of the week all cleaning checklists will be passed on to the principal.

### **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:

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should wait in their car and telephone the office.
- The child will be brought from their class to the parent by a member of staff
- The child will be signed out by a member of staff
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

### **Teacher Meetings**

As parents/guardians are requested not to enter the school building, meetings with teachers will take the form of a scheduled telephone conversation.

### **Work within the classroom and at home**

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be in a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

- The Department of Education has asked schools to focus on the curricular areas of language and numeracy from the outset this year. They have also asked that particular attention is given to the areas of physical education, SPHE, and RE so as to foster a sense of well-being and calm amongst the children upon their return to school.
- The school will try to decrease the number of books being transferred between school and home particularly with older class groupings.
- Homework will take place but may be different in content from other years. There will be no formal homework given for the month of September.
- The school will attempt to integrate aspects of our contingency plan in the event of a sudden closure into normal practice.
- Parents and students will be encouraged to engage with online platforms to avoid disruption if a localised lockdown takes place. This applies especially to senior class groupings.

### **Special Education Teaching**

As per Department guidelines SEN will take the form of withdrawing the children from the classroom. SETs will be assigned to specific bubbles and will withdraw the children accordingly from those bubbles.

### **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route 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
- The isolation area will be a room on the ground floor close to the back door to allow for easy exit from the school building
- The child's temperature will be taken
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
- The child presenting with symptoms should 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
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. 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
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- 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 are generally unwell
- **Reminder to anyone attending school who has travelled abroad:**

Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone.

It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of 'normal precautions' ("green"), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes

school staff, parents and children or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible.

### **Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time due to illness or having an at risk family member in their home, the class teacher (and/or the SET teacher, where relevant) will suggest activities to support the child's learning at home.

### **Impact of a Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

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

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

### **The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Staff members are required to wear PPE where at least 1m social distancing cannot be maintained throughout the school day. O'Brennan National School has procured a plentiful supply of PPE such as soap, sanitiser, masks, visors, gloves, cleaning products and equipment. PPE will need to be worn due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. This might include roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

Our school will supply plenty easy access to PPE for everyone. However children can bring their own PPE such as their own sanitiser and face coverings if they so wish. That is a matter for parents and guardians.

**Masks:** The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings. The revised guidelines recommend that staff wear masks or face coverings where 1 metre social distancing cannot be maintained. Visors will be provided to staff members who wish to wear them.

**Gloves:** There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.  
Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs or administering First Aid.  
There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

### **Hygiene and Cleaning**

40 sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at front and back doors to the building, in the school hall, in the office areas, in each SET Room, in the library, computer room, sensory room, all toilets and at the entrance to each classroom as well as in each classroom.

Warm water and soap is available in all classrooms, in the children's toilets and in every other room where there is a sink.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

We would ask that children would arrive at school each day with clean washed hands.

Good effective hand washing techniques will be explicitly taught in each class bubble.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school cleaners will do a thorough 'Covid Clean' in our building every evening when classes are finished. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities. They will also use a disinfecting fogging machine in each room every day which reduces the risk of airborne transmission of illness.

We have procured a fogging machine for the school's use and it would be used in certain circumstances ie. The aftermath of dealing with a suspected case.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

### **Office**

A contactless payment system has been set up to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/Guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging online payments through Aladdin.

Children should not be sent to the Secretary's Office or to the Reception area for any reason other than an emergency situation during the school day.

As far as possible, staff members other than the principal should not enter the Office area and should speak with the Secretary at the Reception area.

### **Photocopying**

There are two photocopiers – one upstairs and one downstairs – teachers should use the copier nearest to them.

Only one member of staff may use the copier at any time and any queue should form outside the office.

The copier must be disinfected after every use.

No children may use the photocopiers at any time.

Staff to carry out their own shredding.

### **Corridors and Stairwells**

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when on the stairs and in the corridors.

However, there will be much less free movement of children and adults around the corridors and stairwells during the school day in order to minimise the risk of infection.

Handrails will be disinfected after every break.

### **Doors and Windows**

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the yard.

Windows should be opened when children are singing as a group, or when they are playing musical instruments. Musical instruments such as tin whistles should not be shared between pupils under any circumstances.

### **Personal Equipment**

- In so far as possible, it is requested that children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

- It is a matter for parents/guardians if they wish to supply their children with a separate suite of equipment for home and school use. It is not a recommendation in the DES guidelines for the safe re-opening of schools.

### **Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared such as iPads. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals and after every use to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

### **Lunches**

Carambola will not be supplying lunches on Wednesday August 26<sup>th</sup>, Thursday August 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday August 28<sup>th</sup>. All children must bring their own lunches on those dates.

Carambola lunches begin on Monday August 31<sup>st</sup>.

A designated adult associated with each class bubble will collect and disseminate the Carambola lunches and school milk to children who avail of both each day.

Children who do not avail of Carambola lunches should bring their lunch to school in a lunchbox as normal.

All children should bring their own water to school as communal drinking water taps cannot be used in accordance with the public health advice.

### **Drop Off Point for Forgotten Items**

It happens that quite often children will forget to bring items of equipment, sports gear, lunches, drinks etc. to school. We ask that extra care is given to bringing all relevant items to school each morning this year in particular.

If it is a case that your child/children forget to bring something to school you need not worry. There will be a designated drop off box placed under the canopy outside the main door.

In the event of a parent/guardian/adult needing to drop something to the school for a pupil(s) we ask that you would:

- Wash your hands before dropping the item in the box.
- Put the item in a bag.
- Label the item clearly with your child's/children's name on it.
- Leave the item in the box and telephone the office to let us know that you have dropped the item in the box.
- A member of staff from your child's/ children's class bubble(s) will collect the item from the box and deliver it to your child.

### **Physical Education and P.E. Equipment**

Physical Education lessons will take place outside as much as possible during the initial part of the school year. It is recommended that these lessons would take place using as little

equipment as possible so as to minimise the risk of infection in our school. We will review our position on this matter after a number of weeks.

### **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. In such circumstances the S.E.T. aligned to that bubble will teach the class.

### **Book Rentals**

Book rentals will need to be returned so they can be disinfected and kept in isolation for 72 hours prior to use. Our preference would be that they are left in the sheds they were collected from (which are open now) but if this is not possible they can be brought in during the first week of school. Please ensure the books are double bagged and labelled.

### **Roll**

The Roll will be completed on Aladdin by each teacher before the morning break. Absences should be notified to the office and will be communicated to the teacher.