

Return to School 26-08-20

Dear Parents,

We are really looking forward to welcoming your children back to school again on Wednesday 26th August and to welcoming our new 2nd classes. A lot of work is going on at present as we prepare for the safe return of all our pupils in accordance with the recently issued guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills.

Re-opening our school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our school community – staff, parents, pupils, leadership team and our Board of Management. We all need to work collaboratively and play our part to ensure that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner which prevents the spread of the virus and allows the vital work of teaching and learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible.

Some of the main changes are outlined below.

There will be staggered times for the arrival and dispersal of each class group.

6th Class: 8:50am-2:30pm

5th Class: 9:00am-2:25pm

4th Class: 9:10am-2:20pm

3rd Class: 9:15am-2:15pm

2nd Class: 9:25am-2:10pm.

Parents are asked to drop their child at the gate, where a member of staff will receive them and direct them to their class. Parents are asked not to gather in Deverell Place but to move quickly on after dropping their children.

In keeping with Department of Education guidelines we have developed a plan to create an environment that will enable children to continue their education in school. To that end, the cooperation of the entire school community is of upmost importance. The following outlines how the school will operate upon the return of children.

Morning:

- Staggered times. If you have more than one child, please bring both children at the later time to avoid congestion outside the school. We will not be using our Stamp Books for punctuality/ attendance etc. as it is in everyone's interest that the arrival and dispersal of children is spread out over a period of time.
- Children go directly to their classrooms where the class teacher will meet them and they will sanitise their hands.
- Walking or cycling to school is strongly encouraged. In the case of children coming to school in a car parents should drop the children and leave Deverell Place immediately and carefully.
- Only children should come inside the school gates in the morning. There will be teachers present to direct the children.
- Ensuring continuous movement and avoiding any congregation will enable us to avoid any unnecessary risk of spreading the virus.

Afternoon (collecting children):

- If you have more than one child collect both children at the earlier time. Please let the teacher at the gate know or send a note to the older child's class teacher.

The Classroom:

- 2nd class: Under the Department of Education Guidelines it is accepted that children in these classes do not need to maintain physical distancing throughout the school day.
- We have been instructed by the Department of Education to use all available space to ensure physical distancing for children in 3rd -6th classes. The hall and Parents' Room will now be used as classes. We wish to thank the staff and principal of Central Model Infants' School for their co-operation in this matter.
- 3rd -6th classes: Children will sit in groups/pods of about 6 children. It is not possible to maintain 1m between all children, however, 1m distance will be kept between pods.
- Children should have their own equipment (in a pencil case) - pencils, colouring pencils/Twistables, rubbers, parer, pritt stick etc. -for personal use in school. Where possible they should be labelled.
- There are hand sanitisers and soap in each classroom and children are required to wash/sanitise their hands before eating, after yard time, after P.E. and after using the toilet. Hand sanitiser will be provided but your child may bring in his/her own, if preferred.
- Mixing with other classes will be avoided during the school day. Windows and classroom doors will be kept open for the majority of the time to ensure increased ventilation.

Homework

- There will be no homework for the first two weeks.

The Yard:

- There are separate yard times for each year group to reduce the risk of children mixing with other year groups. Yard times will be staggered.

Teachers/ Special Needs Assistants:

- For the most part teachers will maintain a 2m distance from children. It is accepted as inevitable that teachers/ assistants will need to be closer to children at times in order to help them. At such times face coverings will be used.

Special Education:

- Learning support and Language Support will continue.
- Special Education teachers will work with the same groups/ children in so far as possible.

School Office:

- Access to the school is not permitted without an appointment.
- Please email the school (info@centralmodeleniorschool.ie) or phone 018788103 if you have any concerns or if you would like to speak to your child's teacher. The teacher will phone back after school.

School Cleaning:

- Our school has recently undergone a deep cleaning.
- A cleaner has been employed to clean high touch areas (door handles, toilets, stair rails etc.) during the school day.

Do not send your child to school if:

- You have been in a country which is not on the green list within a fortnight of the school reopening.
- Your child has been in contact with a known case of Covid-19.
- Your child has any symptoms of Covid-19. If they have a temperature, a cough of any kind, loss of smell /taste or have shortness of breath, they should not, under any circumstances come into school. We will be strongly relying on your cooperation in this matter as our main aim is to prevent the risk of infection. The health, safety and welfare of our children and staff always come first and we will all need to work collaboratively to achieve this. We cannot do it without your help!

We are very proud of the strength of collaboration and teamwork within our school community. It is the strength of this collaboration which will play such an important role and will be called upon more than ever before, as we work together in the interest of the health and safety of all our pupils and staff. We will regularly assess and review our plans and adapt them if necessary. Please be assured that we are doing everything possible to ensure that the return to school is a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Deirdre Gartland

Principal