25/08/2020

Dear Parent / Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you all well and looking forward to the return to school next week. While these are very challenging times please be assured that everyone here in Pullough NS are keen to welcome your child/children with the warmth and care you are used to and with all protocols in place to ensure safety.

The BoM and the School Leadership Team have been working to ensure a safe return to school for all pupils and staff next week. We had a full staff meeting last Friday and after a BOM meeting last night the 24th are happy to share the full draft plan for logistics with you now.

Our plan is built around the DES guidelines and national advice for the safe and sustainable reopening of schools. Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

The DES have launched a short video for pupils to watch before coming back and these are available to watch on the links below.

DES back to school advice for parents: https://youtu.be/03RXGM1hMMI

 Infants- Second: <https://youtu.be/92MLB_0nq8Q>

 3rd-6t : https://youtu.be/MVlb0jAm55Y

Our plan has two main areas to support safety for all-

**Decreasing Interaction**- each class will have their dedicated entry/exit door that they use all day for break times as well as coming and going form school. That way all class groups will not mix during the day or meet on corridor. Teachers will have strict routines for monitoring interactions going to and from the toilets and for handwashing /sanitising on return. Pupils will not move around the school on messages or jobs or to get materials.

**Increasing separation**- Our classrooms have been cleared of much of the furniture for books and other materials and for now the hall will have areas for staff to retrieve materials as needed. Each classroom has been set up to maximise the space available to create pods in the senior rooms where pupils will stay for at least the first several weeks. These pods will remain together in the classroom but the class pods can play outdoors as a full class (bubble) during breaks.

**Drop Off and Collection arrangements:**

St Mary’s appreciate your support as we try to safely reopen the school building

We would ask all parents to familiarise themselves with the following drop-off and collection routines for the safe delivery and collection of pupils from school. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year.

It is imperative that

* adults do not come within 2m of each other
* parents do not try to have meetings with members of staff in the playground at drop-off and collection times – meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement and under visitor to school protocols.
* all parents adhere to the drop-off and collection plans as outlined below

**Drop-off Plan**

**All teachers will be ready in their classrooms to allow pupils entry each morning from 9:20**. **No access will be allowed on to the yard before this time and there is no morning or evening playtime on yard.**

 Pupils will come in the walking/bus gates as always (families can walk in together). Staff will be on hand to ensure all pupils enter through their own door.

Infants: Through the new support room entrance to their classroom.

1st/2nd: In their usual door.

3rd/4th: in the door opposite the staffroom

5th/6th: in the main door.

**Collection Plan**

Infants will exit with Class teacher and SNA as always at 2:10.\*

(\*New Infants will finish at 12:30 for the first two weeks.)

**At home time the following will apply: This is to allow each class to exit in turn and prevent mixing of classes as they exit to car/bus.**

**3pm- 1st/2nd will exit. Teacher will accompany to the gate.**

**3:05pm- 3rd/4th will exit- Teacher will accompany to the gate.**

**3:10pm- 5th/6th will exit- Teacher will accompany to the gate.**

**Breaks**

We have decided for now that pupils will have three breaks rather than two. This is to support pupils in getting a movement break during the day as the usual moving around in the classroom will be more limited for now.

 It will also allow classrooms to be ventilated by opening windows and door for fresher air for this time period.

 For now unless it is very wet all breaks will be outside and the staff have this planned. Classes will play in their bubble (class group) only and will be fully supervised at all times. We plan to give each class some footballs etc.. for their use and staff will clean these as per guidelines each day/week.

All pupils will need suitable footwear/coats etc.. as all pupils will be going out at all times.

As always, lunch will be eaten in the classroom with supervision. Freshtoday will start on Monday 31st with lunches and we will have new water bottles and log in details for you early next week. Lunch will come at first for all pupils and parents can cancel via email or a phone call to school. As always, pupils will bring their lunch bags and waste home.

**Hygiene and health protocols:**

While all children will be very welcome back to school, we would remind parents

to keep up with all current advice from the HSE about when pupils should/should not attend school for their safety and that of the school community The HSE issued an update today Tuesday the 25th around symptoms and sending children to school.

 Children who display symptoms of possible concern in school will be isolated with an accompanying staff member and parents will be called and asked to collect them from the school.

Our isolation room will be called the First Aid Room and is located in the hall.

Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

All teachers and staff will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

**If a pupil is unwell during the school day and has been sent home with you it is very important for all in the school community that a pupil only returns when it is confirmed that their illness is not covid-related.**

 **For the health of the school community it is better to contact your GP if the school has asked you to take your child home unwell.**

**If a pupil or staff member receives a diagnosis of covid-19 the HSE will advise/implement next steps re contact tracing or isolation needed**.

**Homework, uniform and Materials**

For the first week there will be no homework set as the staff feel that our pupils need to get used to the new routines in school and enjoy being back and in contact with their classmates again. We will be in touch later next week around a lesser plan around homework for the first half term as we want to minimise books travelling between home and school and also want to continue some digital homework to build on our Seesaw work during the closure.

As mentioned in June we will be in touch later next week re the collection of Book Rental Monies and Insurance. Money for Art/Craft and printing will be collected just before Halloween.

As mentioned in the letter on the website on August 16th please change uniforms immediately after school to ensure nothing travels into your house from school contacts.

Please also note that as per booklist, pupils will be provided with all pencil cases/ pencils etc needed. They only need to bring their own set of colours to leave in school for their own use. Each pupil will keep their pencil case in the individual boxes provided for them and will use these boxes during the day. Teachers will put relevant books in and out along with photocopying as necessary and spray boxes before leaving each day.

**Cleaning**

Our school will comply fully with the cleaning protocols as advised by the DES. Staff have viewed the training and as part of the new protocols we will have pedals bins in classrooms and hands-free soap dispensers all through the school. During the middle break (12:30-1pm) there will be a surface and toilet clean.

Mrs White has made 2 short videos to further explain the entry /collection plans and other important pointers. This can be viewed via the link on the School News page of the website.

The full school Covid-19 Response Plan/Risk Assessment and Logistics Plan are also on the website on the School News page. Website is at pulloughns@weebly.com

Looking forward to seeing all our pupils on the 31st.

Stay safe,

Marguerite White and all the staff.