



Gaelscoil an Chaistil

5, Bóthar na hÁithe, Baile an Chaistil, BT54 6QQ

Guthán : 20768883 / 07969212524

Ríomhphost: gaelscoilanchaistil@googlemail.com

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A thuismitheoir, a chara,

Tá súil agam agus ag m'fhoireann go bhfuil tú féin agus an clann slán sábháilte. De réir a chéile tá a thuilleadh treoir ag teacht ón Roinn Oideachais. Seo thíos na sonraí don athosú scoile.

My staff and I hope that you and the family are all safe and sound. We are gradually receiving more guidance from the Department of Education. Here are the current details for our school restart.

Staff for 2020/21 has changed slightly. Ráicheál will be teaching in our Naíscoil; Pádraigín will be teaching Rang 1 and 2; Seanán will be going on maternity leave at the start of the year and a new teacher called Órlaith will be teaching Rang 3 and 4. A new teacher, Déaglán, will be teaching Rang 5 and 6 and Grace will be teaching Rang 7. The classroom assistants will be placed throughout the school. Juliana, Seáinín and Peter will continue in their current roles.

As stated in my previous letter, restarting the school will be an important moment for staff, parents and children. The Department of Education has decided that teachers will return to school on Monday 17 August; that Rang 7 will return on Monday 24th August; and that the rest of the school will return from September onward.

Our aim would be to achieve maximum face-to-face teaching time for all pupils at the earliest opportunity. However, currently, one metre of distancing is required between children and two metres between adults and children. The plan set out here is based on this distancing and we envisage it remaining thus for the month of September, initially. Most children would attend school two days a week and work from home three days a week. **Our plan will be reviewed as and when circumstances change or we get further guidance from the Department.** We have organized our classrooms to ensure that the required distancing is in place.

Rang 1 to 7

Rang 7 will attend school every day (Monday to Friday) as we can accommodate the full 15 children in the room and therefore, no remote learning needs to occur.

Rang 2, 4 and 6 will attend school each Monday and Tuesday and Rang 1, 3 and 5 will attend each Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays will see Rang 1 to 6 teachers planning the work for the week ahead which will include in-class and remote learning.

Naíscoil an Chaistil

Within Naíscoil an Chaistil during 2020/2021 there will be 17 pre-schoolers and 9 underage children. Each year group will be dealt with as a 'bubble' and will be kept together as much as possible throughout the day. Each year we carry out a phased, settling in period during September and parents are issued with a timetable specific to their child. Naíscoil parents will get this timetable shortly. The plan for our Naíscoil is that the 17 pre-schoolers will attend from Monday to Wednesday and the 9 underage children will attend on Thursday and Friday.

Starting dates

Rang 7 will start on Monday 24th August

School will be closed on Monday 31st August

Rang 2, 4 and 6 will start on Tuesday 1st September

Rang 1, 3 and 5 will start on Thursday 3rd September

Naíscoil children will start as per their individual timetable.

Learning and Teaching

In the entire school, our focus will initially be the children's wellbeing and mental health. We will ensure that children are given opportunities to safely interact with each other and to re-connect with their friends and teachers.

We will take a blended approach to learning. In order to deliver the Northern Ireland curriculum, staff will combine classroom-based teaching and learning methods within school with a range of remote learning. Teachers will decide on topics and work that need to be taught within the classroom and choose other work that children are more able to carry out at home.

Handwashing and sanitizing

We ask all parents and guardians to ensure that pupils wash their hands before coming to school each morning. We ask you to teach and encourage your child to practise good hygiene, i.e. washing hands after sneezing/ coughing, covering mouth and nose when sneezing/ coughing. **Children displaying Covid symptoms should not attend school and we ask parents to make us aware of any symptoms within their household.** Car-sharing with children of other households should be avoided

Each day staff and pupils will wash their hands as soon as they arrive at school and regularly throughout the day. We will have hand sanitizers in hallways, classrooms and bathrooms and we will have soap and paper towels in all bathrooms as normal.

PPE will only be required in a very small number of cases, such as working with pupils who require intimate care needs and administering medication. PPE should not be worn by children.

Stationery

Pupils will be unable to share stationery items and parents will be asked to provide the following items and label their child's name clearly on all items.

Pencil case; Pencils; Colouring pencils

Rubber; Sharpener; Pritt stick; Scissors; Ruler

Staggered Arrival and Pick up times / Break and lunch arrangements

Arrival and collection times will be staggered to ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and social distancing maintained. Parents should not enter school buildings unless required. Where parents must enter school buildings, they need to ensure that they use the hand sanitizer provided.

Each year group will be dealt with as a 'bubble' and will be kept together as much as possible throughout the day. On Mondays and Tuesdays Rang 2 and 6 will be asked to arrive at 8.45 and Rang 4 and 7 at 9.00. On Thursdays and Fridays Rang 1 and 5 will be asked to arrive at 8.45 and Rang 3 and 7 at 9.00. Rang 7 should also come to school at 9.00 on Wednesdays.

Children will eat their break at their desks and play in the yard within the individual year groups. Lunch time arrangements still need to be finalized and this will depend on what arrangements are put in place for hot meals.

Rang 1 and 2 will leave at 2.00 as normal and we will ensure staggered leaving by Rang 3 to 7 by separating their leaving time by ten minutes. This will be finalized shortly.

What protective measures will be in place?

Our normal summer clean is currently underway. The staff have laid out their classroom furniture to facilitate 1 metre distancing and unnecessary items have been removed from the classrooms.

During the school year, cleaning will be carried out in accordance with Public Health Agency Guidance and routine cleaning will take place daily, with regular cleaning of door handles, desk tops etc. We've been advised that the general day to day school cleaning coupled with spot cleaning as required is sufficient within schools. Cleaning materials will be available in the classrooms for occasional throughout the day cleaning

What will be done if a pupil becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus and needs to be cared for until they can return home?

All members of the school community will be continually supported to understand the symptoms to look for and clear advice will be provided on how to respond if symptoms become apparent while on-site. Current advice regarding symptoms is a new, continuous cough or a high temperature/fever or anosmia (a loss or a change in your normal sense of smell, which can also affect your sense of taste).

If any pupil starts displaying COVID-19 symptoms, their parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to collect the child immediately and they will be advised to follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. **It is imperative that we have up to date phone numbers for each family, including an emergency contact for cases where the parent or guardian may not be available.** We will keep a full record of such actions and will request that the parent or guardian record their acknowledgement of this action.

While we wait for the child to be collected, they will be moved to a well ventilated room in the office block where they can be isolated behind a closed door. A member of staff will remain with them and we have access to a bathroom if it is required. This bathroom will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by anyone else.

PPE will be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if direct personal care is needed and a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

If the child is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk, the school will call 999. Per guidance received, no attempt will be made to visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Any member of staff who becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms will leave the school site and follow current health guidelines.

As noted previously, we understand that parents and pupils may have mixed emotions on the return to school. We will do our utmost to alleviate any concern or anxieties you may have. The staff are following the correct health guidelines and putting procedures in place to ensure that everyone in our school community is safe. We ask parents and pupils to help us in these endeavours by following our procedures as closely as possible.

On behalf of the governors and staff of the school, I hope that you and your children enjoy the rest of the summer. We look forward to welcoming you all in a few weeks. Take care and stay safe.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Bridín

Nóta breise / Additional note:

If anyone has uniform items in good condition that they no longer require, feel free to leave them into the school. We'll re-open on the 17th August but between now and then items can be left in from Monday to Friday between 10.00 and 3.00 if you wish.

Go raibh maith agat.