



18th August 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Re-opening of St. Mark's Boys National School

I hope you and your families are keeping well. Please find in this letter all the information you need for your son to return to school.

Our first day back at school is Tuesday 1st September 2020.

Re-opening the school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our School Community – Board of Management, School Leadership, Staff, Parents and Pupils. We will all be called on to play our part in ensuring 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.

We have published our COVID-19 Policy Statement on the school website. We will keep you informed of any updates or changes to our Response Plan and procedures and provide you with the information required by you to play your part in safely re-opening the school.

Contact details & email address

We would like to contact you via email in the coming school year to keep you up to date with information and any change in procedures. Please email your personal email address to stmarkscork@gmail.com so we can add your email to your child's contact details. Please check this regularly as we will use this to correspond with you throughout the year.

Can you also please ensure we have the correct mobile phone number for you and up to date emergency contacts. You can also email any changes to the above email address.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be brought to our safe isolation room and parents asked to collect them from the school immediately.

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>

Teachers will be reminding the boys 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.

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.

Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance

We have changed our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much physical distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way.

Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -

Increasing Separation. This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. All children will be sitting 1 metre apart in their class bubbles.

Class bubbles	Teachers
Junior Infants	Aisling Donovan, MaryLou Darcy & Fionnuala Carey
Tír na nÓg	Sharon Cronin
Senior Infants	Deirdre Meade
1st class	Ornagh Feehan
2nd class	Mark Carroll
Inis Geal	Grace Buttimer
3rd class	Hannah Hoban
4th class	Jan O Sullivan
Inis Free	Terry McCarthy
5th class	Aisling Finn
6th class	Colm Bond

Decreasing Interaction. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles/ classes to interact. We have new entrances and exits for all the classes on their return on September 1st. Children will be directed by their teachers and staff on Tuesday September 1st and guided to their new class lines.

Bubbles will have different lunch-time access to the playground and no class bubbles will be mixing on yard. We will make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

Drop-off and Collection Routines

We have finalised our plans for drop-off and collection of the children every day. We appreciate your support as we try to safely reopen the school building. **We request you do not to come onto the school grounds unless it is absolutely essential.** If you need to pass on a message to us, please use the contact details below.

Contact details for the school

Phone

Please feel free to contact us by phone on 021 450 6225 from Tuesday 1st September.

Email or direct message

You can also email the school using this email address stmarkscork@gmail.com at any time or send a message to our Facebook page [St Marks Boys National School](#) and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

We appreciate that dropping off the Junior Infant pupils to their line in the yard is essential especially in the first two weeks, but for the rest of the pupils from Senior Infants up, they should be dropped off at the top of the steps at the pedestrian crossing, where they will be met by members of staff in the school carpark. No children are allowed to enter the school through the staff car entrance.

Working together we hope to be able to progress the reopening in as safe a manner as possible for all. 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.

Class	Drop off time	Collection Time
Junior Infants	9.10 am	1.40 (when full day commences)
Tír na nÓg	8.50 am	1.40 (Infants) 2.30 (for all other children)
Senior Infants	9.00 am	1.50
1 st & 2 nd class	No earlier than 8.45am	2.30
Inis Geal	9.05am	2.40
3 rd & 4 th class	8.45 am	2.40
5 th & 6 th class	8.45 am	2.45
Inis Free	9.05 am	2.45

**** These times are subject to change. We will keep you informed and give plenty of notice if we do need to adjust the above timetable****

It is imperative that while dropping off and collecting your children,

- adults do not come within 2m of each other
- parents cannot have meetings with members of staff in carpark at drop-off and collection times – meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement, see school contact details above. (depending on public health guidance at the time of the meeting - it is quite possible that the recommendation will be for online or phone meetings)
- all parents adhere to the times of the drop-off and collection plans as outlined above. Parents/ Guardians are asked to be punctual with our drop off and collection plan as it has been devised with the safety of everyone in mind.

Drop-off Plan

Parents/ Guardians if you arrive early for drop off, please wait in your car with your son until staff open the pedestrian gate @8.45am. If walking, please wait by the top car park keeping your distance from others.

Collection Plan

Children will be walked by staff to the pedestrian steps at the time outlined above. Parents, please wait at the footpath by the top car park keeping your distance from others. When you see your sons class approaching the pedestrian steps in the staff car park please cross the road to wait by the top of the steps and your son will walk up to meet you.

Book Rental

Book Rental for 2020/21 total is €45. This is due by 22nd September 2020.

Please put this money in an envelope and give it to your son coming to school. As you will not have access to the school building to pay Joan in person this year you might like to ring Joan to let her know your son has the envelope in his bag or email us so we can get your receipt ready for you.

Materials needed

Children will be required to have two sets of stationary, one for school use only, and another set for home use only that will be kept at home.

-Pencil case with pencils, rubber, parer, pens, ruler and colours/ twistables will be needed for each set.

You will receive a list of the required copies and any extra materials needed on your sons first week back in school.

The only materials needed for your sons first day back at school is his pencil case as outlined above.

School Lunch

School lunch will be provided as usual to every pupil. You will be provided with your code on the first week so you may change your sons order online. I would like to remind you that you have the

opportunity to change your sons lunch order online whenever you wish throughout the year. Orders will need to be changed before a Thursday for them to come into effect from the following Monday.

We would also like to remind you of our schools Healthy Eating Policy. We do not allow treats or chocolate Monday- Thursday. One small chocolate bar or treat can be brought in on Friday. No fizzy drinks or crisps are allowed. If you are sending in a small lunch for your son, we ask that this is in his school bag when he arrives at school in the morning. Entering the school premises is on an essential basis only so if you do not have your sons lunch prepared and ready in his bag at drop off we cannot accept it throughout the day but he will have his lunch provided by Fresh Today in school so he won't be hungry.

School Uniforms

In St. Marks Boys National School, we have a school uniform and school tracksuit. We have **NOT** been directed by the Department of Education, NPHE or the HSE that children will be required to have their uniform washed after school every evening. Instead we ask as normal procedure if there is a day that your son may have dirtied his uniform in school that you send him in the following day in a spare clean uniform if available or his school tracksuit and this will give you time to wash his uniform. Teachers will let you know what day your son will be required to wear his tracksuit for PE. We ask that your son wear his uniform every other day if possible. For any child who is still learning to tie their laces, please ensure they wear shoes with Velcro.

The School Staff are looking forward to welcoming all our pupils and parents / guardians back to school for the 2020/2021 school year on Tuesday 1st September.

We are satisfied that we have control measures in place to ensure that this will be a safe re-opening. It will take some time for all of us to get used to the "new circumstances" as we become familiar with the new routines and procedures designed to keep everyone safe and to prevent the spread of the virus. There will, undoubtedly, be some unforeseen challenges and we will deal with these as they arise.

We know that our boys are really looking forward to coming back to school to meet their friends again. We are aware that this will be a different school year than any before but we have made our plans to ensure everyone can return safely to school and that the new routines and procedures will be as free from stress as possible.

I want you to rest assured that we will be implementing our Covid-19 Response Plan following strict guidelines from HSE, Department of Education and NPHE for the reopening of St. Mark's and we want to thank you in advance for following and adhering to the procedures, drop off and collection times as well as the communication means we have set out above. Your cooperation is essential for us in ensuring that the return to school is a safe and enjoyable experience for the children.

We are really looking forward to welcoming the boys back to school.

Kind regards,

Johanna Carroll

Principal