



Dromore Road Primary School

Upper Dromore Road
Warrenpoint
County Down
BT34 3JH

29th June

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to thank you for your support and understanding during the recent period of school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been especially difficult and disruptive for our pupils and we all look forward to returning to school in the new term.

I would like to pay tribute to all staff and especially the teachers, who have worked so hard over these past weeks to keep teaching and learning continuing at home through an online approach. I would also commend you as parents for your effort and commitment to home schooling; we have been encouraged by your tremendous efforts.

Our preparation and planning for the new term is taking shape and I would like to assure you that the staff and Governors will have the safety of everyone in our school community as our guiding principle. As we are still in a fluid situation, I feel it is too soon to outline definite arrangements but at this stage I can communicate that I have met with other Principals in our cluster and agreed:

- Schools in our area will reopen on Monday 24th August for an induction week which will focus on the pastoral needs of our pupils, their health and wellbeing and the enhancement of a 'reconnect' between pupil and school, helping our pupils settle back into the new school day and the changes to their school environment. We plan that all P7 pupils will restart school on Monday 24th and the other pupils will be phased in during the week. All P2-7 pupils will attend on Friday 28th August. Specific details regarding dates and times will be provided in due course.
- Schools in our area will use various patterns for reopening. The DE guidance encourages schools to seek to maximise the ability of their existing space to accommodate pupils, and over the summer months we will explore all viable options and class arrangements to ensure all pupils return to school in some form of full time capacity.
- Social distancing measures will be in place throughout the school but a 'protective bubble' strategy will also be promoted, as we know that our younger children will find it particularly difficult to social distance during playtime.



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- As outlined in DE guidance, arrangements for parents to drop off and collect children/young people will need to be adapted to ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and social distancing is maintained. It is likely that we will need to implement arrangements regarding staggered arrivals/collections and details will be communicated in due course. At both arrival and collection times, parents should avoid entering the school buildings as a means of preventing spread of the virus. Where parents must enter school buildings, appropriate hygiene measures will be in place.
- The guidance provided by DE in many ways reinforces practices we have all become accustomed to. It promotes regular handwashing on arrival at schools and throughout the school day and the application of the "catch it, bin it, kill it" principles. All schools will be reinforcing the good practice that you are undertaking at home, to educate your children in the necessary measures for minimising the spread of the virus, e.g. 'Catch it, Bin It, Kill It', thorough handwashing, maintaining social distance etc. we trust that this good practice will continue. Likewise, in preventing the spread of the virus, it will be important that children do not attend school if unwell, particularly if they have a high temperature or a new persistent cough.
- As we are unlikely to have the use of our hall for PE initially, we will be streamlining our uniform for the incoming 2020/21 school year. Parents should only purchase the school logoed tracksuit, logoed polo shirt and black trainers. PE will utilise our outdoor areas. Only clothing with our new logo should be worn next year please, and to ensure consistency in colour and style, uniforms should be purchased from our official supplier. Tracksuits can be ordered via email through the following address: saintsand scholarsorders@gmail.com or by telephone and can be either collected or delivered with a charge for delivery. Saints and Scholars are also adding our school to their online shopping page and we will update you when this has been set up.
- The DE 'Return to School' publication also indicated that schools should consider discouraging or prohibiting children from bringing anything from home and, at the end of each school day, limiting/preventing shared resources from being taken home. With this in mind, local schools have agreed that pupils should not bring school bags or PE kits to school when we initially return.
- Sharing of stationery items, traditionally supplied by the school, will also be discouraged when we return to school. We would ask that your child brings a fully stocked, easily wiped, pencil case with them on their first day back. This will remain in school and be exclusively for your child's use.
- Obviously pupils will still be allowed to bring their own packed lunches. When preparing your child's packed lunches, please think about using disposable packaging or alternatively use a plastic lunchbox that can be washed clean with soapy water on a daily basis.
- Details on school meals have not been confirmed at this stage but while social distancing puts pressure on space availability, it is likely alternative arrangements will be put in place.



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Over the summer, it is likely that schools will receive further DE guidance and our plans may need to evolve or totally change! Please be assured that we will keep you updated and the governors will continue to explore how the needs of our pupils can be best met, yet remain compliant with Department of Education and Public Health Authority Guidance. We appreciate your ongoing support and we look forward to working in partnership to ensure our schools remain a place of comfort and nurture for all.

Finally, it remains for me to wish you a pleasant summer break. I trust we will be able to enjoy some relaxation after what has been an uncertain period for everyone.

As soon as I have any definite details about the return to school I will be in touch and I look forward to seeing you all again when school resumes.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs S. McGrath

(Principal)