***ST JOSEPH’S PRIMARY SCHOOL***

**Tel No: 02844 830810 4 Ballynahinch Road**

 **Crossgar**

 **Principal: Mrs S McArdle BT30 9HS**

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I hope you have all had a lovely Summer and are getting prepared for your child’s return to school. We are looking forward to welcoming them all back and hope that this year will be a more settled one for everyone. Having received the latest guidance from the Department of Education, I wanted to update you on information for the return to school which you should carefully read. Our over-arching concern for the safety and well-being of your children remains unchanged. Covid-19 has, however, necessitated many changes within all schools and given the success of those changes we will be continuing with these when the children return. Please read the following information carefully whilst being mindful that I have a responsibility to pupils and staff, some of whom contain members of vulnerable groups. We want to do our utmost to protect everyone in our current climate and try to keep our school open for everyone.

The plan for reopening the school site is detailed below.

MORNING ROUTINE

1. Staggered drop offs and pick-ups will continue for each class – although children from the same family may bring all their children in at the one time. Parents MUST exercise responsibility and not congregate in the car park or gather in the school yard.

Here is the following drop off times and pick up times for each class.

Class Drop-off time Pick-up time(Mon-Thurs) Friday

P7 8:45am 2:50pm 1:50pm

P5&6 8:50am 2:55pm 1:55pm

P4 8:50am 2:55pm 1:55pm

P3 8:55am 3:00pm 2:00pm

P2 8:55am 2:00pm 2:00pm

 P1 9:00am 1:55pm (12:15 until 10 Sept)1:55pm

Older children should come into the school yard without an adult if you feel it is safe for them to do so. NO PARENT/ GUARDIAN / NON-STAFF MEMBER IS PERMITTED TO ENTER THE SCHOOL BUILDING. This is a huge change from our normal Open Door policy but is required to minimise cross-contamination or unnecessary contact.

Staff will meet and greet your children at the designated entrance doors.

Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival and wash their hands.

We will review this situation as necessary.

ENTRANCE / EXIT POINTS

Children will wash hands after entering their classrooms. Please advise us if your child is allergic to hand sanitiser.

P1 – side door near the classroom

P2- cloakroom door

P3 – side door by p7 classroom

P4- side door by p7 classroom

P5&6 second mobile classroom door

P7 – side door by their classroom

BREAK TIME

Break times will be staggered for classes with different parts of the playground being used for the different classes also.

LUNCHTIME

1. We will continue to have some classes having playtime before eating lunch and some after as our hot food comes from Saintfield Meals Kitchen.
2. Hot meals will be available daily and can be booked only through our cashless school money system. Primary 1 parents will be provided with details soon.
3. All children will wash their hands before and after eating.
4. Meals will be available from 1 September.

HOME TIME

1. All pupils will be lined up with their class group and brought to the exit doors by their teacher where they will wait until the appropriate adult is identified and the child is released to them. Adults should line up at the appropriate door and maintain 2m social distancing in the yard at all times wearing a face mask.
2. Children who walk home will leave the school building and will walk directly up the street. You need to write a note to the teacher to tell him/her if your child is walking.
3. Parents/ guardians are requested to respect social distancing rules as they wait at the doors and face masks should be worn by adults at the school gates and while on the school premises. Please remove children promptly, avoid congregating and evacuate the car park as quickly as & safely as possible.

RESOURCES

1. P4-P7 should bring a school bag, p1-p3 can purchase a book bag £4 from school when needed. Some classes may continue to use Google Classroom. Your child’s class teacher can advise you on this when needed.
2. Full school uniform including black shoes should be worn by all children daily. Please note, whilst the PE gear for the older children has always been a white polo shirt and black/navy bottoms, the younger ones have always worn the yellow polo shirt as they came dressed for PE to school. Whilst wearing PE gear you can choose which polo shirt – white or yellow your child can wear. Children from all classes should wear PE gear to school on PE days and ONLY on these days. Your child’s teacher will inform you when PE is once the timetable has been arranged.
3. Children can bring stationery into school and will have individual pots allocated to them. They will be encouraged not to share stationery. Each child should have their own pencil, eraser, sharpener, ruler(older children) and pritt stick glue.
4. Children must NOT bring other things into school (toys etc.) without authorisation to prevent cross contamination.
5. Some homework may be set up online or on paper.
6. We would kindly ask each parent to donate a box of tissues and a packet of anti-bacterial wipes to the school to help us in promoting good hygiene with all the children.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

1. Present a positive front! Reassure your child that it’s going to be different again but it’s still our school and we have already been doing these things.
2. Send your child to school wearing the correct School uniform and PE uniform. NO GAA or SOCCER JERSIES.
3. Ensure all items of school uniform are labelled with your child’s name on them.
4. Remind your child about good handwashing and hygiene measures, coughing or sneezing into a tissue or arm.
5. Send your child in with tissues and a packet of anti-bacterial wipes.
6. Your child needs a water bottle sent in each day with fresh water
7. Ensure your child has a healthy snack each day and lunch when needed. It would greatly help if you told your child each day if they are taking dinner or lunch. If taking dinner, your child’s meal should be pre-booked the previous day as the School Money system has a cut off time.
8. Ensure your child has their snack, water and lunch each day as well as all the things they need to avoid unnecessary visits to the school.
9. If you send in plastic break containers / lunch boxes, these must be washed daily.
10. All clubs, morning care and after school care should be pre-booked and paid for in advance using our School Money System as we are a cashless school. Morning care will begin on 1st September costing £1 per person per day. After school care will begin on 1st September costing £3 per person per hour and will be available from 2-5pm and 2-4pm on Fridays. Details on after school clubs will follow at a later stage when they have been scheduled.
11. IF YOUR CHILD COMPLAINS OF FEELING UNWELL, IS HOT TO THE TOUCH, HAS A PERSISTENT COUGH, OR HAS LOST THEIR TASTE OR SMELL YOU MUST NOT SEND THEM TO SCHOOL. You must not give them Calpol and send them on into school. If you are unsure, you must err on the side of caution in order to protect the whole school community.
12. Should your child become unwell in school, they will be placed under supervision in the learning support area and MUST BE COLLECTED WITHOUT DELAY. It is vital you can be contacted and that you have provided us with up to date telephone numbers if they have changed.
13. Ensure your contact details are accurate and up to date – contact Mrs Edemen in the office with any changes immediately.
14. Although your child may have no written homework initially, that does not mean they have no homework! Ensure your child reads every night, learns their sounds/spellings/tricky words and completes any tasks set by the teacher. Online homework may be given.
15. We still want to support your child if they fall or are distressed. If you do not wish your child to be touched, then it is important that you communicate this to the class teacher as soon as we return. We understand that everyone will have their own opinions on this.
16. Parents will no longer have easy access to teachers to deliver messages face-to-face. Please email the teacher or contact the school office. Mrs Edemen will deliver a message to the teacher who will respond as soon as possible. Teachers may not see emails immediately when they are teaching.
17. If in an exceptional circumstance a parent needs to make an appointment to see the teacher, this must be pre-arranged and you must wear a face mask. Most communication should be carried out through the above however.
18. Sign up to School Money the cashless payment system we are using this year when the information becomes available. We will not be using cash in school and all payments for lunches and any other events MUST be paid online using this system. Any cash sent into the school will be sent home again. Details will follow on how to register.

Despite this rather prescriptive list of ‘Dos and Don’ts’ we are really looking forward to having your child(ren) back in school or greeting them as new members of our school family. Although there is a change in routines, staff will still exercise the same level of care and support towards your children that has always existed in St. Joseph’s.

Whilst we have these routines in place I’ve no doubt plans will have to be adjusted once they are in operation and we review our situation. We will continue to operate under the guidance of the Department of Education and Public Health Agency.

We need your support and co-operation to ensure we can do our very best to safeguard all the children in our school. We look forward to welcoming all the boys and girls back again and can’t wait to hear about their summer holidays.

Take care and best wishes,

Siobhan McArdle

Principal