

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School

RESTART PLAN

July 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

This plan has been written in line with guidance from the Department of Education to provide information for you as to how we intend to reopen the school in the new academic year.

It is important to point out that Public Health advice at the time of reopening will prevail over the planning assumptions made in this document.

The Covid-19 virus is still present and continues to have profound implications for society. It would therefore be unhelpful to be too prescriptive about all the arrangements for our restart. We must retain a degree of flexibility to best meet any issues that may arise as we return to school.

It is essential that children are reminded of the significance of hygiene in preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Therefore, we would ask you to emphasise the importance of a regular and thorough hand washing regime. To prepare children for the school reopening you should ensure that your children know how to properly wash their hands for at least twenty seconds with soap and tepid/lukewarm water. This is particularly important for younger children. When children do return to school they will be asked to wash their hands as a repeatable discipline throughout the school day.



While not negating the need to wash hands, hand sanitisers will be used as a support for hand hygiene. Children can bring hand sanitiser to school for their own individual use (labelled with their name). To prevent possible skin reactions, we would ask that under no account should hand sanitiser be shared.



In advance of the school reopening you should also discuss, explain and promote good respiratory hygiene to encourage your children to follow the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' approach. Children should be discouraged from touching their eyes, face, nose and mouth. They should be shown how to cough or sneeze into their elbow if they don't have a tissue. If they have a tissue they should be shown how to cough or sneeze into it and then dispose of it safely into the nearest bin.

You can help to emphasise these issues and build up a level of routine actions on the part of your children before they return to school.

Please note that if your child has any symptoms of having the Covid-19 virus he/she should stay-at-home and your household should isolate in accordance with the latest Public Health advice. Symptoms include: raised temperature, persistent cough, loss of taste and loss of smell.

Before children are brought to school each day we would ask you to take their temperatures to ensure they are normal. The school has non-contact thermometers which may be used to check the temperature of any child who appears to be off form. If any child presents as being unwell while in

school, they will be brought to an isolation room and supervised while medical advice is sought and their parent/guardian contacted.

If there is a confirmed case of someone in the school having the Covid-19 virus the school will adhere to and participate in the Department of Health's 'Test, Trace and Protect' strategy. As this requires early identification and isolation of such cases, rapid testing, tracing of close contacts and early, effective and supported isolation to break transmission chains it will be necessary for the school to have accurate records of everyone who has been in contact with anyone who tests positive. When the school reopens it will be necessary for us to record the name and contact details of everyone who enters the school buildings even if it is only for a short time. This will include school staff, the children, parents/guardians and all visitors.



If you have a child who is clinically, extremely vulnerable please contact the school on Monday 17th August, when the school office officially reopens, to discuss his or her individual needs.

When the school reopens there will be a number of changes/new arrangements from our normal routines and it is important that you make sure your children are told of this so as to avoid uncertainty and possible anxiety. This would be especially important for younger or vulnerable children.

The Education Minister has stated that Primary 7 children, as a priority cohort for transition purposes, should return to school on Monday 24th August, if safe to do so. The Minister has also stated that it would be appropriate for vulnerable children to be considered as a priority cohort too. All remaining children should return to school the following week.

Therefore, our Primary 7 children should attend school from Monday 24th August and children from Primary 2 to Primary 6 should return, after the August Bank Holiday, on Tuesday 1st September. We will contact the parents/guardians of vulnerable children during the week beginning Monday 17th August to discuss when it would be appropriate for their children to attend. Our Primary 1 parents/guardians will be informed within the next few weeks the arrangements for their children starting and finishing school.

When school reopens only staff cars will be allowed in the school grounds. This will mean that for those of you who drive your children to school you will need to give some thought to drop off and/or parking. Whilst we are aware of the implications of this request we would ask that if you do drive you give consideration to our neighbours and be mindful of where you park so as not to prevent egress from driveways. It is also important that car sharing with children of other households be avoided.

To stop congestion and large gatherings at the pedestrian entrance of the school we would ask children to enter via the main double gates on the school driveway. As we only intend to allow staff cars into the grounds the driveway will be clear of traffic from 8.40am when all staff are due to have arrived.

Initially, for the new academic year, as a means of preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus, there will be no Morning Room. As school staff will be available to welcome the children as they come through the gates and quickly lead them to their classrooms; we would actively discourage you from coming in to the school grounds in the mornings. It is recommended that only one parent/guardian should escort the children from their household to school, if the children cannot walk to school by themselves.

Each day, during the week beginning Monday 24th August Primary 7 children should arrive **no earlier than 8.50am** and go straight to their classrooms for a 9.00am start.

From Tuesday the 1st September all children should **arrive no earlier than 8.40am** and they will be directed to their classrooms by school staff for a 9.00am start. This gives a twenty-minute period for children to arrive.

It is important that appropriate social distancing is observed when children are entering the school grounds. Therefore, the start to the school day will be closely monitored and should we find there is congestion/crowding with too many interactions around the school gates specific times for each year group's arrival may have to be introduced.

It is acknowledged that young children cannot reasonably be expected to remain apart from each other throughout the day. Children, especially young children flourish mentally, physically and emotionally through interactive play, including group play. Therefore, to mitigate the risk of virus spread each class will be organised as a 'protective bubble' where the membership of the class (i.e. children and adults) will be consistent. As far as possible there will be no contact between children and adults from different classes. Maintaining protective bubbles is a means of decreasing interactions between groups until further easing of measures is possible based on Public Health advice.

The use of protective bubbles will cover all aspects of the school day and consequently we will have designated rooms/areas and staggered meal and play times. This will all be explained to the children when they return. From day one, teachers will try to orientate the children to the new arrangements in a child friendly way. We want the children to be excited about coming back to school and also relaxed. Teachers will do their best to ensure they feel at ease.

The free school meals payment scheme has been extended until the end of August to ensure that eligible children do not go without food during the summer holidays. Therefore, the Education Authority school meals will resume on Tuesday 1st September. For the foreseeable future these will be delivered to classrooms with disposable containers and cutlery. At this time, we do not have a meals menu but it is likely that for the first few days school meals will consist of a packed lunch. When more is known you will be informed.

All children should continue to bring a healthy break to school and where they are not availing of a school meal they should also bring a packed lunch. These food items should be packaged in disposable wrappers and **not** in lunchboxes. Children can bring a reusable water bottle (labelled with their name) to school that will be kept in the classroom.

It is frequently the case that parents/guardians throughout the day drop in items for children such as breaks and lunches. We would prefer not to take in items to pass on to children, so would kindly ask that you are organised for each day.

Apart from and a healthy break and/or lunch, children **should not bring** schoolbags, pencil cases, toys or other items to school. Teachers will provide children with pencils, other stationery and other items they may need while they are at school.

At this time, we have no information as to when or how peripatetic music lessons, delivered by tutors from the City of Belfast School of Music will resume.

When school reopens we will explain how homework, including home reading will be delivered.

While children should attend in full school uniform, there will be a relaxing of the requirement to wear black shoes. You can choose to buy **mainly black trainers** instead (N.B. **not** trainers with vivid colours and complex patterns). This will eliminate the need for those children who would have brought additional footwear to change into for playing games such as football when they are outside with their class during lunch.



Teachers will notify you of the days when they intend to do PE and on these days, to avoid children changing for this activity, they can come to school wearing a plain white polo shirt (no tie required) and black tracksuit bottoms (no logos - see image). The school jumper or cardigan can be worn on top as normal.

School staff will wear PPE (following Covid-19 guidance for educational settings) for their protection. This might include wearing visors if they need to work in close proximity with a child or gloves, an apron and a mask if they are giving first aid to a child who has fallen and hurt themselves.

At the moment, the general wearing of face coverings in school is not recommended for children or adults.

At present it has not been possible to eradicate cash handling arrangements in the school. Therefore, we would ask you that when sending cash to school you place it in plastic bags or cling film clearly labelled as to what it is for. It is **essential** that the correct amount of money is provided as change will not be given.

Unfortunately, as we are sure you can understand, the restart of school does not mean that we can operate on a business as usual basis from day one. This means that initially we are unable to provide our Afternoon Room facility or afterschool activities. However, should there be additional guidance provided by the government that we can comply with, we will make available these facilities as we know they are a support for many of our parents.

Regardless of weather conditions, children will be dismissed from school in the afternoons from the front yard. The finishing times will be staggered as follows:

Primary 2 - 2.00pm	Primary 3 - 2.10pm
Primary 4 - 2.30pm	Primary 5 - 2.40pm
Primary 6 - 2.50pm	Primary 7 - 3.00pm

It is essential that you collect your child/children at the specified time/times to avoid unnecessary congestion/crowding.

Again no cars will be allowed into the school grounds at the end of the day as the driveways will be used for pedestrian access. To avoid congestion/crowding we would ask that only one parent/guardian comes to collect a child and that they follow strict social distancing at all times. School staff cannot police your social distancing and it is your role/responsibility to ensure you follow the guidance.

Teachers will not be available to chat to you at pickup times, so if you want to talk to a member of staff you will need to phone or email the school and the teacher will contact you directly.

This plan and the precautions set out in it have been put in place to help stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus and to ensure that we all take responsibility for this. These arrangements will be kept under review and any changes will be communicated to you as and when appropriate and/or necessary. It is therefore important that you regularly check your email or visit the school website (www.parklodeschool.com) and/or Twitter account ([@parklodeschool](https://twitter.com/parklodeschool)) for updates.

Yours sincerely

S Merrick
PRINCIPAL