

Logistical plan for the re-opening of

St. Pius X Schools



August 2021

This document is divided into 5 different sections:

- **Section One: Safe Entry and Exit from School**
- **Section Two: Covid and attendance at school**
- **Section Three: PPE and Hygiene Procedures**
- **Section Four: School Buildings and Classrooms**
- **Section Five: Teaching and Learning**

Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

Assumptions

- Children return to school and classes will continue to operate within a bubble system (except for those children in the high-risk category – outlined later in this document)
- Within each class (bubble) from 3rd to 6th, the children will be further divided into pods (normally 4/6 pupils) with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods
- The school will continue to operate a staggered start and finish time during the pandemic
- The school will be split into 2 groups with each group having different starting and finishing times.
- All classes will enter and exit the school through the external door outside their own classroom

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- Breaktimes and access to the yard will be staggered. There will be two “little breaks” and two “big breaks”
 - Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and in all class and support rooms
 - To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk/cycle/scoot to school if it is at all possible.
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Section One: Safe Entry and Exit from School

- To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, there will be no access onto the school grounds until **8.40am** every morning. Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival.
- In order to mitigate risk of infection and to minimise the number of people in our school yard at any given time, we will continue with staggered arrival and departure times for our children from September 1st. **Parents will be notified of their own child’s group start and finish times via email in advance of reopening early next week;**
- Unfortunately, it will not be possible for all parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds before/after school.

Infants to 2nd

Parents/guardians of children from Infants to 2nd will walk into the yard with their children and accompany them to the external classroom door. We would request that only one adult accompanies each child. Each class group will be given a designated collection area.

3rd to 6th

Children will enter and leave the school grounds unaccompanied. Staff will be present at the school gates to direct and assist the children. Parents/guardians should arrange a suitable place beyond the school grounds to meet with their child at the end of the school day.

- **From Wednesday 1st September** and until further notice and subject to review by the BoM, we will adhere to the following staggered arrival and departure times.
 - Group A: 8.45am
 - Group B: 8.55am

Junior Infants are on a shortened day for the first week of school and will be notified separately with times.

No adults, other than staff members, should enter the school building without prior appointment.

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Messages for teachers can be sent by email to secretary@piusxgns.ie or secretary@piusxbns.ie or by phoning the school office.

Collection during the school day

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply

- Prior notice of collection should be sent via email to the school secretary and class teacher
- When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived
- The secretary will phone the class teacher and the child will be brought from their class to reception
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out. Adults are requested to carry their own pen for this purpose
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

Procedure for Entry/Exit

All adults are requested to wear face shields when entering the school grounds and to maintain the social distance of 2m as far as possible. We would also request that adults do not stop to chat on the school grounds or congregate at the school gate. If you drive to school, please wait in your car with your child until your allocated time. If walking or cycling, please time your journey to arrive at the school at the appointed time. As stated earlier, there will be no access to the school before 8.40am so please do not drop your child off before this time

Unfortunately, there is no facility to wait on the school grounds if you have different collection times. We respectfully request that you **exit the school grounds immediately after collecting your child.**

Girls:

A one-way system will apply. Enter through the double gates and exit through the pedestrian gate which is closest to the garden. Please move promptly to your external classroom door.

Boys:

A one-way system will apply. Enter through the double gates and exit through the pedestrian gate that is closest to John Ryan Photography. Please move promptly to your external classroom door.

School Wardens

- Whilst 2 metres may not always be practicable, it has been requested that crossing users allow sufficient space, whilst remaining on the footpath, between themselves and the School Warden

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- Try not to interact with the School Warden in a physical way e.g. high fives,
- When dropping children to school please do not congregate at the crossing after drop-off/before pick-up for social interactions
- For those that continue to drop children to school by car, in the interest of safety for our children and the traffic wardens do not park/idle/wait near the school crossing as this poses a hazard to all crossing users.

Visitors to the School

Visits to the school during the school day should be by prior arrangement. All visitors must report to the school reception/office. All visitors must complete a visitors' contact log sheet. Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained where possible.

In relation to forgotten lunches, books etc there will be a designated box in the porch for items to be placed.

All meetings will be strictly by appointment.

Breaktimes

The DES guidelines state that the risk of virus transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when primary school children play together outdoors, but in so far as is practical and possible we will try to keep children within their class bubble during breaktime.

Each group of classes will have access to the yard during their allotted break times as follows:

	<i>Little Break</i>	<i>Big Break</i>
Group A	10.15am	11.55am
Group B	10.35am	12.30pm

Children will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities

Yards will be supervised by class teachers, learning support teachers and SNAs working within those groups

Section Two: Covid and attendance at school

Children who should not attend school

Following the summer break, we are looking forward to welcoming all of our children back to school.

However, if your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19

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- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of time
- Children who are generally unwell

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with the parents/guardians. Cases will be dealt with on an individual basis and parents of these children will be contacted separately by their teacher or the special needs co-ordinator.

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms. In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

Note: Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised.

Staff, pupils and visitors should at all times adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the COVID-19 virus.

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Updated advice from the HSE is available on
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

A designated isolation area has been created in the “Seomra” (GNS) and GP Room (BNS).

Pupils

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures which will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. He/She should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is presenting with symptoms of Covid-19.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

Staff Members

Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal or LWR and go to the isolation area.

- A face covering will be provided to the staff member who is symptomatic.
- The staff member who is symptomatic should maintain a 2m distance from others if possible and avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- They should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin
- If the staff member is not well enough to go home, they should wait in the isolation room away from others and mindful of the need to observe good respiratory and hand hygiene. Arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.

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- If they need to use the bathroom they should wipe contact surfaces for example taps and clean their hands after attending the toilet.
- Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- If the staff member is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is presenting with symptoms of Covid-19.

The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality are essential at all times.

It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

Suspected Case

If a child is sent home from school due to their symptoms other parents in the class will not be informed. Other pupils or staff do not need to be removed from class including siblings or other household members. When the person is referred for a test, at this point the person becomes a suspected Covid-19 case and the household members including siblings should be withdrawn from school by their parent or guardian. If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected case of Covid-19, no further action from the school is required.

Confirmed Case

When a case has been confirmed, the Medical Officer of Health and teams will liaise directly with the school and inform them of the confirmed case as necessary and will undertake a Public Health Risk Assessment to inform any further actions and recommendations. Any actions to be taken by the school will be communicated directly by Public Health HSE. School management will be informed as and when such actions such as exclusion of children or staff: partial or full closure, are deemed necessary on public health grounds. If the school is not so informed, it has **not been deemed necessary** by Public Health.

COVID-19 Related Absence Management

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution

If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such

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circumstances, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team.

An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.

The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

Section Three: PPE and Hygiene Procedures

As per recent guidelines all staff will wear face coverings when a distance of 2m cannot be maintained. Face masks will be provided. All adult visitors will also be required to wear face coverings when on the school grounds.

For a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. This might include roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Administering First Aid
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.
- When staff members have to move between classrooms to support children with learning needs.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

Masks

At present, it is not recommended that primary school children wear masks. However this does not preclude parents from allowing their child to wear masks if they so wish.

Gloves

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.

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Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs or administering First Aid.

There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

Temperature Checks

On-site temperature taking is not recommended because fever is not a consistent symptom of Covid-19 in children and would result in delayed school entry. HSE guidelines at present are that parents and/or educational settings do not need to take children's temperature every morning

Hygiene and Cleaning

As part of our cleaning programme we will continue with our sanitisation system called Bio-Misting, which is used in conjunction with the Steri-7 disinfectant range of products. Bio-Misting is an effective way to remove, kill and prevent the spread of viruses such as Covid-19. All the Steri-7 products which we will be using have what is called re-active barrier technology - RBT. This barrier which is left on a surface after it is cleaned, will stay active for a period of 7 days. This means that after an area has been cleaned, should subsequent germs be re-introduced to a surface, Steri-7 will re-activate and kill those germs and viruses immediately. In effect, it works in between cleans.

The schools will also receive a professional deep clean before we return and on regular intervals over the coming months. Our own cleaning staff will supplement this by bio-misting twice a week also. Please see link for further information <https://youtu.be/6fDYlcOlV8Y>

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom. Everyone entering the school building will be required to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap dispensers and paper towels for drying hands will be provided in all toilets.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

Section Four: School Buildings and Classrooms

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort has been made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will continue to work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

Classroom space has been reconfigured to maximise physical distancing in the following way:

Junior Infants to Second Class

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble. However, as a staff we will endeavour to minimise sharing and maximise physical distance between children.

Third Class to Sixth Class

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per Pod. Each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod – this does not apply to yard times (**children can play socially distant manner with anyone in their class/ bubble**). All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space in the classroom as possible.

There will be limited interaction on arrival and dismissal and in corridors and other shared areas throughout the school.

Pupils and teachers should avoid sharing of personal items such as pens and other writing materials

Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets the contact surfaces of the devices will be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Where sub-groups are formed within a class for group work, to the greatest extent possible the same pupils will generally be in the same group, although movement between groups may be necessary to address tensions between pupils.

Corridors

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the right when in the corridors.

Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridor or cloakrooms

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

Doors and Windows

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

Ventilation

The school adheres to guidelines in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools'. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. Further monitoring instruments will be utilised by the school when supplied by the DE. [Details of the Department's CO2 monitor scheme can be found here.](#)

Cloakrooms and Toilets

Additional soap dispensers and hand sanitisers have been installed. Children will go out to the cloakroom in rotation

Office

Children should not be sent to the Secretary's Office to deliver messages.

As far as possible, staff members should not enter the Office area and should speak with the Secretary at the Reception area.

Photocopying.

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

Staffroom

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2 metres cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

Section Five: Teaching and Learning

As a staff, we are very aware of the time missed “in school” last year. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

We wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2021/2022 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children on their return to school.

Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

Staff members (particularly Learning Support Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimised where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

Learning Support

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of a bubble.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children from 3rd to 6th Class receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean by the SET teachers in between different groups attending.

Special Educational Needs

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in some instances will not be practical or reasonable to implement. The focus should therefore be on

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emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which might suggest illness/Covid-19 infection and where symptoms are present, children should not attend the school.

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using either soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean).

Wellbeing of the School Community

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

Substitute Teachers and SNAs

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

Personal Equipment

- In so far as possible, it is requested that children from 1st to 6th Class will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment. This pencil case should be left in school. We would request that pencil cases are kept small and contents kept to a minimum.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.
- For children in Junior and Senior Infants, the school will provide a pouch or container which will hold each child's pencils, crayons, etc., and which will be labelled with their name.

PE

Where possible, PE will continue to take place outdoors. If the PE hall is being used by class groupings, common touch points will be cleaned at intervals throughout the school day. Class teachers and pupils may take additional breaks outside during the school day eg classes may

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be encouraged to participate in the “daily mile”. When rotation of classes occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

Rain coats

As there will be additional outdoor breaks (rain or shine) we ask that children bring a suitable rain coat/mac to school daily

Extra-curricular Activities

It is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time. The staggered finishing times will also make the scheduling of after-school activities problematic. This will be reviewed and explored further at the end of the first term.

Lunches

Parents/Guardians must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice.

Please ensure to wash lunch boxes daily.

If a child forgets their lunch, it can be dropped up to the school and left in the designated box in the porch. Please label the lunch box with your child’s name and class.

Water

Please ensure your child comes to school with a full bottle of water as access to water fountains/drinking water will no longer be available.

Please ensure to wash water bottles daily

Pencil Case:

From September, children are asked to have a ‘school’ pencil case **which is left in school at all times**. (Junior Infants will not need a school pencil case.) This pencil case should be **compact** so that it will fit in the basket under/on the desk with textbooks and copies to facilitate daily cleaning of table tops. Children should also have a ‘home’ pencil case for completing assignments and homework at home. This measure will have the added bonus of lightening the schoolbags. Children will not be able to share pencils, pens, erasers, coloured pencils etc.

Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.

Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and as far as possible should not share with other pupils.

Uniforms/Tracksuits

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families.

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For the school year 2021/2022 we will be reverting to our normal uniform policy. To this end, we would also ask that all pupils wear uniforms on non-sport/tracksuit days (i.e. PE days).

ICT

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley.

Parent/ Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher Meetings which usually take place at the end of October will be assessed closer to the time.

Conclusion

This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie, www.education.ie or agreements with education partners as appropriate for primary schools.