Dear Parents,

August 27th is fast approaching and preparations for the safe reopening of our school are going well. Both our Back to School Committee and our Board of Management met again this week to review progress and to plan for the week ahead. As I said in my last letter there will be changes to school life as we know it and listed below are some of those changes, all of which are in line with Department of Education Guidelines.

* No parents will be allowed into the school yard at morning or evening time.
* Parents or visitors to the school will be strictly by appointment only.
* The playground will be clearly marked out showing where each class enter and leave the school and where each class are to gather (social distancing will apply from 3rd Class up) in the morning. A map showing these markings will be sent home before we reopen.

There are other practical matters that will be new to the children and these include each child bringing a 35 litre box for their books (3rd Class upwards), each child having two whiteboard markers in their pencil case, and each child having a personal hygiene kit consisting of sanitiser gel and tissues.

All of these changes will quickly become the new normal and I have no doubt that the children will adapt very quickly. I would like to thank the parents that have already volunteered to help with the preparations and any others willing to help, with painting in particular, please get in touch.

Some of you have been enquiring about our tracksuits and I am glad to say that Buckleys will be in school this Tuesday August 18th, to take orders for them. We will obviously stagger the times so we will start with the Infants and 1st Classes at 10am, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Classes at 11.30 and 5th and 6th at 12,30. Tracksuits for siblings can be ordered together so one visit will do.

**Junior Infants**

This may seem a strange thing to say but of all classes Junior Infants will be least aware of all the changes going on in school. They have never been to primary school so they will presume that this is how it works, This will be very important on the first morning when parents will be leaving them at the gate to be brought in by a staff member. It will be important that parents accept this as well and leave very quickly after dropping their child. To make that first morning a little bit easier we will not be expecting the Junior Infants in school at 9.20. We are going to stagger their arrival between 9.45 and 10.45. We are not going to give specific times but are asking parents to space out their times out, be patient and wait in the car if there is a build up. It might be a good idea if you could time your arrival with a friend of your child.

Despite the plans laid out above I realise that a child’s first day at school is a big occasion for parents and children alike so I do think it is important to mark the occasion. I am suggesting that on Thursday next, August 20th, parents and children (in their uniform) can come in, view their room and take photographs. They can also bring in their books and leave them there. Families whose surname begins with A to M can call between 10am and 12 and those with surnames beginning with N to Z can arrive between 12 and 2pm. Any issues with this please contact the school by email.

Regards,

Denis Murray