



VIRGIN MARY BOYS' NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope you have all had a lovely Summer break. The time has come for us to reopen our doors and welcome back all our amazing students. I would like to say thank you to all the parents and guardians. Last year, you supported your children throughout school closures, in all the usual ways, but also with their education and their understanding of COVID19. The staff of the Virgin Mary Boys' School really appreciate the cooperation and support that they received with distance learning measures. Along with Government guidelines, the measures adopted last year will continue for the 2021/2022 school year.

The staff, along with the Board of Management are continuing to redevelop our COVID Response Plan, in line with Department guidelines. This will be available in full on our website once complete. The COVID19 policy is currently on our website. I would like to outline the essential details of our plan, so you can better understand how our school will work when we reopen on Thursday, August 26th at 8.50 a.m.

ARRIVAL AND COLLECTION

- We have always welcomed parents and guardians into our school, recognising the importance of their presence in our school community. However, due to COVID19, we must insist that, aside from exceptional circumstances, parents must not enter the school yard at any point or the school building without a necessary, pre-arranged appointment.
- **We would ask adults dropping or collecting children to wear a face covering at all times.**
- It is vital that adults practice social distancing when dropping collecting. This will allow us to avoid staggering drop off times, making it more convenient for all. Please follow signs and social distance markings.
- Children will be dropped at 8.50a.m. at one of four points, depending on their class. Class teachers will be on the yard inside the gate, with their line (with one metre spacing lines for pupils) Adults leave the children with the teacher on the gate, who then directs them to their class teacher. SNAs will be available on the yard to walk children to their line if necessary.
- Children will use hand sanitiser when joining the line, provided by class teacher.
- Lines will enter the building one at a time.
- If dropping brothers in different classes, chose one drop off point and leave all children at the one point. They will be walked to their line (if necessary).

DROP POINT 1: This is the gate beside the bin shed.

DROP POINT 2: This is the green gate, opposite the priests' house.

DROP POINT 3: This is the gate at the top of the yard, leading to Coultray.

DROP POINT 4: This is the emergency exit door, beside the flagpoles at the front of the school.

*DROP POINT 5: This is the previously unused door at the front of the school, beside the bike rack. It will only be used for senior infant collections and late drop offs.

Early Start (Karla Kelly): Drop point 4 for drop off and collection.
Junior Infants (Ms Ryan): Drop point 1 for drop off, collection, drop point 4.
Senior Infants (Ms Duane): Drop point 2 for drop off, collection, drop point 5.
1st Class (Ms Mc Cabe Wessels): Drop point 2 for drop off and collection.
2nd Class (Ms Keane): Drop point 1 for drop off and collection.
3rd Class (Mr Mc Devitt): Drop point 3 for drop off and collection.
4th Class (Mr Lennon): Drop point 3 for drop off and collection.
5th Class (Ms Maguire): Drop point 3 for drop off and collection.
6th Class (Mr Cafferty): Drop point 3 for drop off and collection.

- When collecting please continue to wear face coverings and practice social distancing.

IN SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

- We feel passionate about education and making our students feel safe and welcome. Despite certain restrictions, we will continue engaging all students in enjoyable learning experiences. The following protocols will be used in our school:
 - **HAND HYGIENE**
If hands are visibly dirty, they will be washed with soap and if they look clean, hand sanitiser will be used. Hand hygiene will be practised before and after most activities...group activities, bathroom breaks, eating, yard, any physical activities, entering and leaving the school etc
PLEASE PRACTICE PROPER HAND WASHING WITH YOUR CHILDREN, IT SHOULD TAKE AT LEAST 20 SECONDS!!!! The school will provide hand sanitiser. We ask that you do not send in personal supplies, to ensure maximum safety.
 - **'BUBBLES AND PODS'**
Classes will be treated like a bubble, in that they will not mix with any other class AT ALL. Each class has a separate space for yard and cannot leave their class area. We are very lucky that we have such a vast yard, hence children will have plenty of room to play.
Within each class, the children will be arranged in small groups or 'pods'. They will be seated 1 metre apart from each other, where possible. Pods will be 1 metre apart from each other.
Children in different pods can mix freely on the yard, within their own class, still maintaining a 1 metre distance, where possible.
 - **FRESH AIR**
Windows will be left open, to ensure good air circulation. There will be additional breaks outdoors, along with the two yard breaks we currently have.
 - **PPE FOR STAFF**
Staff members will wear masks when less than 2 metres away from students. When there is no need to be closer, they will also aim to keep a 1-2 metre distance from students, where possible. Staff members will also practice social distancing from each other, even in the staff room.
 - **HIGH RISK CHILDREN**
Where a student has a condition that makes him 'high risk' and is advised not to physically return to school, **as deemed by a consultant or medical specialist**, the school will work with the parents/guardians with remote learning to ensure that the child continues to learn with his

class. If a child is high risk, but advised to attend school, the school will ensure that all additional measures are carried out, in order to keep that child safe.

- **ADDITIONAL CLEANING**

We will have additional cleaning done daily, with commonly touched areas, like door handles etc regularly cleaned throughout the day with non-acidic, skin friendly sanitiser.

EARLY START

Parents of Early Start children have been contacted to let them know of the alternative arrangements for the first 2 days. To remind you, children will attend for 30 minutes at their arranged time for the first 2 days. From Monday, 30th August, for 2 weeks, they will attend in their morning group, from 8.50-10.20 or afternoon group from 12-1.30. They will have the full day, from September 13th.

JUNIOR INFANTS

Unfortunately, we cannot have parents dropping the infants into class this year for their first day at 'big school'. We are asking parents to drop the Junior Infants to school, at drop point 1 at the later time of 9.10. The other students will have gone into school and the yard will be a calm place!! The boys will be met at the gate by their teacher and and SNA and will then be walked into their class. They will finish at 11 on Thursday and Friday. From Monday 30th August, for 2 weeks, they will finish at 12. They will have the full day, finishing at 1.30, from September 13th.

As we all know, COVID is transmitted through saliva. We will be extra vigilant with our youngest students when it comes to monitoring objects being put into their mouths. There is a designated storage container for objects placed into mouths in every classroom. These objects will be taken immediately (in a friendly manner!!) and placed in the container, they are then out of use until they are washed with detergent, dried and disinfected.

I hope I have provided you with enough information about our COVID19 precautions. I also hope that you feel reassured that we are all working incredibly hard to ensure that school can restart for your children, in a safe, controlled environment. Should you have any concerns or questions, please contact the office on 8421314 and make an appointment to talk to me. Appointments will be via telephone for the foreseeable future, unless strictly necessary. I can also be contacted via email at info@virginmarybns.ie. Please also check our website virginmarybns.ie for any updates.

If contact details need to be updated, please contact our new secretary, Lorna, in the office to let us know. It is vital that we have working phone numbers and emails for all parents and guardians.

Thank you for your patience and please continue to bear with us while we continue to navigate these tricky COVID waters.

Kind Regards, as always, from all of us here in The Virgin Mary Boys' School.

Aisling Cox

School Principal

Deirdre Lonergan

Chairperson, Board of Management