

# ST JOHN THE BAPTIST INFANT GIRLS' SCHOOL



**RE-OPENING THE SCHOOL - MARCH 2021**

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## Underlying Principles and Assumptions

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The school has a responsibility to make an 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 cooperation 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 cooperation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented. These are unprecedented times, so as the weeks continue, we will review our policy and procedures to make sure they are working and add further guidance as it becomes available.

### Assumptions

All children returned to school and classes operate within a class bubble system. The school is split into three groups with each bubble having different starting times, lunch times and finishing times. Bubbles will be constituted of:

- Junior Infant classes
- Senior Infant classes
- First Class classes

The day will include two 20-minute breaks.

Hand sanitizer will be available at all entry points and in all class and support rooms.

### Additional Challenges

- Only one entrance/exit to the school grounds.
- No on-site parking for parents/guardians.
- Limited and busy space on Seafield Road West.

## Timetables

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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.

Times for class bubbles to arrive and leave school will continue to be staggered. We ask for cooperation with this, as it will mean that the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time will be minimised. Each bubble should aim to arrive at the school immediately preceding their start or collection time and not beforehand. Please wait outside the main gate until your arrival or dismissal time.

- Adults must wear a mask on the school grounds.
- No adults other than staff members should enter the building.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by email or by phone to the school office.

The system over leaf will apply rain, hail or shine so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather!

# Timetables – First Class

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## First Class

### Arrival

- School starts for all First Class pupils at 8.35am.
- Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival.
- Other staff members including Special Education teachers, SNAs, and the Principal will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children, sanitize their hands and to help them to their classrooms, as necessary.

### Collection

- Pick up will be at the front of the school.
- Class teachers will bring their class to the dismissal box at the front of the school.
- There will be a one-way system in place for parents to walk into the car park area and collect their daughter.
- Children will be asked to signal to their teacher that they have seen the adult collecting them and the adult is asked to indicate to the teacher through gesture or eye contact that she/he is ready to receive the child.

## First Class Timetable

**8.35am: School starts**

**10.15am: Break time**

**10.35am: Class resumes**

**11.55am: Yard time**

**12.15pm: Class resumes**

**1.15pm: Classes finish**

**Pick-up area is at the front of the school.**

## Timetables – Senior Infants

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### Arrival

- School starts for all Senior Infant pupils at 8.45am.
- Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival.
- Other staff members including Special Education teachers, SNAs, and the Principal will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children, sanitize their hands and to help them to their classrooms, as necessary.

### Collection

- School finishes at 1.25pm.
- Pick up will be at the front of the school.
- Class teachers will bring their class to the dismissal box at the front of the school.
- There will be a one-way system in place for parents to walk into the car park area and collect their daughter.
- Children will be asked to signal to their teacher that they have seen the adult collecting them and the adult is asked to indicate to the teacher through gesture or eye contact that she / he is ready to receive the child.

### Senior Infant Timetable

**8.45am: School starts**

**10.40am: Break time**

**11.00am: Class resumes**

**12.20pm: Yard time**

**12.40pm: Class resumes**

**1.25pm: Classes finish**

**Pick-up area is at the front of the school.**

# Timetables – Junior Infants

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## Arrival

- School starts for all Junior Infant pupils at 8.55am.
- Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival.
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## Collection

- School finishes at 1:35pm.
- Pick up will be at the front of the school.
- Class teachers will bring their class to the dismissal box at the front of the school.
- There will be a one-way system in place for parents to walk into the car park area and collect their daughter. Children will be asked to signal to their teacher they have seen the adult collecting them and the adult is asked to indicate to the teacher through gesture or eye contact that she or he is ready to receive the child.

## Junior Infant Timetable

**8.55am: School starts**

**11.05am: Break time**

**11.25am: Class resumes**

**12.45pm: Yard time**

**1.05pm: Class resumes**

**1.35pm: Classes finish**

**Pick-up area is at the front of the school.**

# Summary of All Classes

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## Drop off and Pick up of All Classes

8.35am	All staff to be present to support arrival of children.  Class teachers to be in classrooms.  SETs, SNA and Principal to support arrival of children.
8.35am – 8.55am	Arrival of children in year groups.  No adults to enter the building.  Children to go straight to their classrooms on arrival.
1.15pm	First Class pick up.
1.25pm	Senior Infant pick up.
1.35pm	Junior Infant pick up.

## Breaktimes

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces and play areas is low.

## Yard Supervision

A rota will be organised based on class bubbles and the SETs allocated to those classes.

# Changes to Classroom, School Layout and to School Routines

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The DES guidelines recognize that a common-sense approach is needed in our primary schools and, to that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

It is recognized 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 grouping. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival into school in the morning until children go home at the end of the school day.

## **Team Teaching / Special Education Teachers / Special Needs Assistants**

Staff members, particularly Learning Support teachers and SNAs, can rotate between areas or classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitizing routines will be observed.

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, as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble.

Where a support teacher is working alongside the class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.

The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different children or small groups attending.

## **PE Hall**

Children's physical wellbeing is a central part of their overall wellbeing. Children will work individually or in their pods using minimal equipment. Any shared materials used will be sanitized between classes to minimize the risk of the spread of infection.

## **Library**

All classes have a class library. The Library will not be used at this time.

## **Corridors and Stairwells**

Briefly passing someone 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 the practice of keeping to the left when on the stairs and in the corridors. Children's hands will be sanitized upon entering and leaving their classrooms.

## **Additional Measures to Limit Interactions**

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways. While we will all be delighted to see each other again, handshaking and hugging will not be allowed.

# Changes to Classroom, School Layout and to School Routines

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## **Doors and Windows**

Where practical all internal doors will be left open to minimize hand contact with common surfaces. The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation 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.

## **Lunches**

Parents and guardians are asked to please make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your daughters not to share their food or drinks with other children. Children will eat their lunches at their desks as per our usual practice.

## **Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.**

It is requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification. 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.

## **Shared Equipment, including iPads**

By necessity some classroom equipment needs to be shared including the equipment used for structured activities under play. Cleaning of such shared equipment will take place after use by the children in their individual pods with wipes and other cleaning products and at regular intervals to minimize the risk of the spread of infection.

## **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. We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms. Uniforms should be worn every day, except when otherwise requested by teachers.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits only for school-related activities. Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after school facilities/shops or during/after home activities etc.

## **Office**

The school uses the Aladdin contactless payment system to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents / guardians are asked to cooperate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for contactless payments through the Aladdin links they receive.

Children should not be sent to the secretary's office or to the reception area to deliver messages.

## **Changes to Classroom, School Layout and to School Routines**

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As far as possible staff members should not enter the office area and should speak with the secretary at the reception area. Phones have been installed at the top and bottom of the stairs to facilitate direct communication with the office.

### **Photocopying**

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

### **Visiting teachers and coaches**

The possibility of facilitating extracurricular activities such as GAA and tennis is not possible during Level 5 restrictions.

### **Substitute Teachers and SNAs**

A copy of the COVID-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher / SNA.

### **Staff Room**

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of two metres when they're not engaged in teaching, e.g. when they're using the staff room and arriving to work. If two metres cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings must 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 staff room as far as possible.

# Teaching and Learning

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We appreciate the time and effort that went into home learning, and we recognize the challenges that home learning presented for all families.

Each child will be at a different place in relation to her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for teaching and learning during the remainder of the 2020/2021 school year. We ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

We will continue our usual practice of providing support to children based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides whole school and classroom support for all children, additional school support for some children, and school support plus-extra targeted intervention for a few children with complex needs.

## **Wellbeing of the School Community**

We will continue to work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our children 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.

## **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 special education teacher where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents or guardians.

## Hygiene and Cleaning

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Hand sanitizer is available throughout the school, e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom. Warm water and soap are available in all the toilet areas, staff bathroom and staff room and in Rooms 1, 3 -10.

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasize safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Hand sanitizing will take place:

- As the children enter the school or classroom
- Before and after handling shared equipment
- Before eating
- After returning from yard
- Before leaving.

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 or armrests, 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.

### **The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

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

### **Masks**

Staff members are required to wear face coverings when a distance of two meters cannot be maintained. The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings.

### **Gloves**

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines. Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs or administering first-aid.

## Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19

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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 <http://www2hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

**Current HSE/Government guidelines for children who have travelled abroad should be followed.**

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 any pupil who feels unwell makes that known to their teacher as soon as possible. A designated isolation area has been created in the school in the event of a suspected case.

If a child displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- The child will be accompanied to the isolation area.
- A face covering will be provided for the child.
- A distance of two metres will be maintained.
- If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.
- The child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. (To help us in this regard parents and guardians are asked to make sure their contact details are kept up-to-date at all times. If you know your details have changed, please email [secretary@belgrove.ie](mailto:secretary@belgrove.ie) with the new information).
- Parents/guardians are also asked to inform the school if their child has any underlying health conditions.
- If the child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- If your child is symptomatic, parents/guardians are advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms.
- If the child 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 a Covid-19 suspect.

## Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19

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### **School staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.**

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

The staff member who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

If the staff member is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.

If a staff member is symptomatic, they are advised to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms.

If a 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 a Covid-19 suspect.

The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines. 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 is essential at all times.

# Absence Management and Employee Wellbeing

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## **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. The school requests staff (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

## **COVID-19 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 or SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher or SNA for the class or pupil. If a substitute teacher or SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class or people to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances it may not be possible for the class or people 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.

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.