



# SCOIL BARRA NAOFA

## Newsletter #1

August 2020

A Chairde,

As we approach September 1<sup>st</sup> and look forward to the reopening of school I would like to say how much we are looking forward to welcoming you and your family back to Scoil Barra Naofa. We have been working very hard all Summer to prepare for the safe return to school and I want you all to feel confident that your child's safety and wellbeing are paramount in our plans.

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

A sense of safety

A sense of calm

A sense of belonging and connectedness to the school

A sense of sense efficacy and school community efficacy

A sense of hope.

The successful reopening of schools relies on the cooperation of the whole school community. Great understanding and flexibility will be required by all. The plans outlined in this newsletter may change over the course of the initial weeks and will grow and change in relation to government guidelines.

Please read the plans for reopening carefully. Don't hesitate to contact the school office if you have any concerns or queries. You can email [info@scoilbarranaofa.ie](mailto:info@scoilbarranaofa.ie) or phone 4842159. Unfortunately we cannot invite you to meet us in the classroom or school office for now but we hope in the near future this may change.

The SBN Covid Response Plan and Covid 19 Policy Statement will be published on the school website [www.scoilbarranaofa.ie](http://www.scoilbarranaofa.ie) next week. Here you will find further details on the reopening of schools and dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19 in school.

An updated Code of Behaviour and Health and Safety Statement will also be published on the website. Please read these documents and stay informed on all school details and information related to Covid 19.

We look forward to seeing you all on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Mise le Meas,*

*Ger O' Brien agus Foireann na Scoile*

## **TEACHERS, SNAS AND CLASSROOMS**

Downstairs;

Junior Infants; Ms Marshall. Room at lowest level of school. Previously Second Class.

Senior Infants; Mr Murphy. Room at lowest level of school. Previously First Class.

First Class; Ms Flannery. Room at lower entrance door. Previously Junior Infants.

Second Class; Ms Mulrooney. Room opposite kitchenette. Previously Senior Infants.

SNAs; Mary and Jacqui will work with children downstairs.

Upstairs;

Third Class; Mr O' Connell. No change to 3<sup>rd</sup> class room.

Fourth Class; Mr Walsh. No change to 4<sup>th</sup> class room.

Fifth Class; Ms Cremen. No change to 5<sup>th</sup> class room.

Sixth Class; Mrs Donnelly. No change to 6<sup>th</sup> class room.

SNAs Audrey and Claudia will work with children upstairs.

Special Education Teachers;

Ms Ní Bheara, Ms Treharne, Ms Dwyer and Mrs O' Boyle (Job Share)

## **ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL**

School gates will open at 8.35am each morning. Please note slight change to prior arrangement when gates opened at 8.30am.

Children/parents should not arrive to school before 8.35am as supervision will not be provided. Furthermore, early arrival leads to the danger of children and adults congregating and spreading of the virus.

Children from Senior Infants to Sixth Class may arrive at school between 8.35am and 8.50am. This 15 min window allows for a natural staggering of arrival.

All children from Senior Infants to Sixth should be dropped at the main gate.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds with the exception of parents of the new Junior Infants. Please help us to minimise the risks and help us to maintain physical distancing on school grounds.

Children with additional needs may be met by their sna at the school gate if necessary. Special Needs Assistants will also be happy to help any children slow to return of unsure of their new classroom.

Unlike previous years children should not go to the halla. Children will instead go straight to their classrooms.

All class bubbles should remain completely separate and with this in mind we ask that older siblings do not walk younger siblings to class. Furthermore, one way systems and physical distancing measures in operation around the school will be comprimised by this practise.

Special Education Teachers will be on duty around the school grounds/corridors to assist and direct all pupils.

Class Teachers will meet their children in the classrooms.

It will be necessary for parents of our new Junior Infants to drop and collect children from the classroom. Junior Infants can be dropped and collected from the external classroom door. Junior Infants will have a slightly different schedule during the initial 2

weeks of September. This will enable parents to walk down the lower pathway, drop the children to the external classroom door between 8.55 and 9.10am and exit via the same pathway. Face coverings are encouraged as physical distancing of 2m may not always be possible.

The Junior Infant schedule will be reviewed after the initial two weeks.

Senior Infants to First Class should enter the school via the lower door/halla entrance as they would have done in the past and go directly to their classrooms. Please note that classroom allocation for these classes is slightly different to last year. A list of teachers and classrooms is detailed below.

Second and Fourth Class pupils should enter and the school via the main reception door and go directly to their classrooms.

Third, Fifth and Sixth Class pupils should enter and exit their classrooms via the external classroom doors. Car parking spaces in school car park have been reduced to create a safe path leading around the back of the school leading to the external doors.

**In order to provide adequate space for physical distancing at arrival and dispersal times as well as adequate space for fire drill/evacuation no parking/drop off from cars will be available outside of the school gates.**

**The wheelchair accessible space will be available to anyone that needs that space, however, no other cars are permitted to park, drop off /collect outside of school gates.**

Families are asked to park and stride to school and leave the school gate area free for the safety of everyone in the school community. Families are encouraged to use the car parks at the playground and opposite the Bosun and walk up the hill to school.

## **JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANT DISPERSAL**

Junior Infants will be collected at the earlier time of 12.15 for the initial 2 weeks of September. This will be reviewed after the first two weeks.

Junior Infants should be collected from their external classroom door. A queuing system is marked on the ground top assist you.

Senior Infants should be collected from the main school reception door. A queuing system is marked on the ground to assist you.

Parents of Junior and Senior Infants are encouraged to wear face coverings when collecting their children as it may not always be possible to maintain a 2m distance.

Parents are asked to be on time for collection and exit the grounds as promptly and efficiently as possible.

**Remember there will be no parking outside of school gates during the course of the school day with the exception of those in need of the wheelchair accessible space.**

This system will apply hail, rain or shine so please ensure your child comes to school prepared for the weather.

## **FIRST AND SECOND CLASS DISPERSAL**

Children from First and Second Class can be collected from outside the car park gates at 2.20pm. Please note change to previous collection time of 2.30pm.

Parents are asked to wait outside the school carpark gates and observe physical distancing of 2m while collecting children.

Parents are asked to stand back from the school gates, stay behind the markers, to allow pupils to exit safely.

The children will be walked to the gates by their class teachers at 2.20pm each afternoon and collection will be supervised by class teachers.

If your child is walked home by an older sibling from Third to Sixth Class they may wait with their teacher until their sibling arrives at 2.30pm.

Once you have collected your child we ask that parents exit the area promptly in an effort to clear this space before the next cohort of pupils finish at 2.30pm

Please ensure that your child/children are aware of your collection arrangements daily. Messages on collection via the school office are discouraged unless essential. Messages are delivered over the intercom system and unnecessary/frequent messages are a source of disruption.

**Remember there will be no parking outside of school gates during the course of the school day with the exception of those in need of the wheelchair accessible space.**

This system will apply hail, rain or shine so please ensure your child comes to school prepared for the weather.

### **THIRD TO SIXTH CLASS DISPERSAL**

Third to Sixth Class will finish at the usual time of 2.30pm.

Third, Fifth and Sixth will exit via their external classroom doors one class at a time.

Fourth will exit via the main reception door.

Children will be supervised by their class teacher each afternoon as they exit school grounds.

Children can be collected from outside the car park gates at 2.30pm. Parents are asked to wait outside the school carpark gates and observe physical distancing of 2m while collecting children.

Children should leave the school grounds promptly and efficiently.

We ask that parents speak to their children about how to walk home/to the car in an appropriate manner. It is best practise to remain physically distant at all times.

Please ensure that your child/children are aware of your collection arrangements daily. Messages on collection via the school office are discouraged unless essential. Messages are delivered over the intercom system and unnecessary/frequent messages are a source of disruption.

**Remember there will be no parking outside of school gates during the course of the school day with the exception of those in need of the wheelchair accessible space.**

This system will apply hail, rain or shine so please ensure your child comes to school prepared for the weather.

### **EARLY COLLECTION FOR APPOINTMENTS**

If collecting a child/children for an appointment during the school day there will be two allocated times **10.30am and 12**. To minimise intercom announcements and disruption to class children should be collected at these times only but may return to school at any stage.

When collecting a child early for an appointment please enter the school via the pedestrian gate and proceed to the main reception door. Here you can press the bell and speak with the secretary. Please inform secretary whether child will be returning to school. Children will be called over the intercom system and will meet you at the reception door.

When returning your child to school please proceed to main reception door. Press the bell and inform the secretary of the name of the returning. All children should be walked back to the school by their parent. All children should return via the main reception door and should sanitise their hands on entering the school.

A record of collections will be kept by the secretary as the sign in and out book cannot be shared and parents may not enter the office/building. Please help us to minimise risks and maintain correct physical distancing by adhering to these collection times.

## **DROPPING FORGOTTEN LUNCHES/DRINKS ETC**

If your child has forgotten a lunch, drink or essential medical equipment please do not hesitate to drop these items into school. Children may not share lunches and staff may not share utensils/crockery. Disposable plastic cups and cutlery will be available if necessary and children may take a drink of water using a disposable plastic cup.

When dropping forgotten lunches and drinks please enter the school via the pedestrian gate and walk to the main reception door. Here you will find a covered plastic storage box. You may place the items in this box, ring the buzzer and inform the secretary that you have dropped the lunch/drink inside. Your child will be called over the intercom to collect their belongings.

Please help us to minimise announcements and interruptions by double checking that your child has their lunch and drink before leaving the car/house every morning.

Any other forgotten item should not be dropped to school unless absolutely essential. Books, copies, basketballs and such are not essential. Please help us to minimise interruptions and minimise risk by only dropping essential items to school.

## **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

The DES guidelines recognise that a common sense approach is required in our schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between classes groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

All physical distancing measures have been planned and facilitated in accordance with the DES guidelines.

All classes are referred to as bubbles. As per guidelines all bubbles are to remain separate to one another.

Pods are small groups of children within a class bubble. Children from Junior Infants to Second Class will sit/play in pods while in their classroom. Pods will be arranged 1m apart. Toys/resources will be allocated to a pod and rotated accordingly following sanitisation.

Children from Third to Sixth Class are required to maintain a 1m distance from their peers in class and while travelling through the school building.

Children in Third to Sixth class will sit 2 to a desk, opposite each other rather than side by side. This will provide a distance of 1.2m between children at the desk and desks will be placed 1m apart.

Teachers/SNAs desks should be situated 2m from each other and from the children, however, the DES recommends that if a distance of 2m isn't possible then 1m is acceptable.

Children are not permitted to share pens, pencils, lunches etc. Likewise sharing of class equipment and resources will be supervised carefully and resources will be cleaned before and after use in accordance with DES/HPSC guidelines.

Children should not bring toys or other such personal items to school.

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

Children are not required to maintain a physical distance at yard time, however, bubbles must remain separate. Class bubbles will be assigned their own play area on yard.

Children will be encouraged to avoid close physical sports/games and contact when playing e.g. hugging/hive fives, holding hands etc.



Sharing of common facilities such as the library and computer room will be restricted as these rooms will be used for special educational needs teaching/pods. This will be reviewed in line with DES guidelines.

Perspex screens will be fixed to desks in our smaller SEN rooms. This will allow smaller pods of children to work together with their special education teacher while remaining safe.

Staff members, particularly Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants, can rotate between classes/areas but this will be minimised where possible. Where rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

Where a support teacher or SNA is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both staff members must be mindful of maintaining social distance from each other.

In keeping with DES guidelines, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in class support and withdrawal. Those children diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty will continue to access one to one/small group support as well as in class support.

School assemblies will not take place during term 1. This will be reviewed in line with DES guidance.

Parents/guardians are asked to maintain a physical distance of 2m when dropping and collecting children. Face coverings are also encouraged.

No parents/guardians may enter the school building. Only essential visitors such as the DES inspectorate, NEPs may enter providing they have made an appointment.

With the exception of Junior Infants, no parents/guardians to enter school grounds to drop/collect children.

In keeping with government and public health guidelines anyone returning from travel to non green list countries should restrict their movements for 14 days. Please do not send children back to school if you have recently returned from a country not on the green list.

## **MAINTAINING HYGIENE STANDARDS**

Sensor /no touch sanitiser dispensers have been installed in all classrooms and areas of high traffic throughout the school. Thank you to our partners The Reliance Bearing and Gear Company Ltd for sponsoring the provision of such high quality dispensers.

All classrooms have their own bathrooms.

Soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers have been fitted in all classroom and communal bathrooms.

Outdoor sinks have been installed adjacent to each play area.

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

Ample posters and signage will offer visual reminders to all to wash and sanitise their hands correctly and follow correct respiratory etiquette.

In accordance with DES/HPSC guidelines the school will be cleaned thoroughly once a day with high touch areas, high traffic areas and equipment cleaned throughout the day.

A “fogger” machine will be used to sanitise rooms, toys and equipment on a weekly basis. The solution used in this machine can double as a hand sanitiser and is safe for children and their belongings/area.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain the cleanliness of their area.

Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that books are covered with plastic wipeable covers and these are cleaned daily.

Children are asked to pare pencils at home each day. This will reduce movement in classroom.

Parents/guardians are asked to ensure uniforms, coats, pencil cases and bags are washed regularly.

Children’s lunchboxes, bottles and other equipment should be cleaned thoroughly daily.

Separate bins will be in place in classrooms. A large pedal bin will be used for tissues, paper towels etc and a recycling/paper bin will be used for recyclable waste.

Children and staff are required to dispose of their own lunch waste/compost at home by taking this home in their lunch box.

## **USE OF PPE**

The DES guidelines recommend the staff wear PPE in the form of face coverings when a physical distance of 2m cannot be maintained. Staff will always wear a face covering in the following situations;

- Assisting with intimate care needs.
- Administration of first aid.
- Administration of medicine.
- Where a suspected case of Covid 19 is identified while school is in operation.
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in the very high risk group or may be living with those who are in the very high risk group.
- 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, for first aid or dealing with medical needs, cleaning tasks such as using the fogger machine or sanitising the isolation area.

Perspex screens have been installed in SEN classrooms.

Children under 13 are not required to wear masks. Children that are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in the very high risk group or children living with those who are in the very high risk group may prefer to wear masks. In these cases children should use their own washable masks. Disposable masks are not recommended in case of misplacement or mix up. Parents are responsible for teaching the children how to wear and use the mask appropriately and are responsible for ensuring masks are washed daily.

Gloves are considered inappropriate under the guidelines. Staff members do not need to wear gloves unless they are administering first aid/medicine or looking after a child's intimate care needs.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

As a staff we are very aware that children have been away from school since March 12<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the time and effort that went into distance learning and we recognise the challenges that distance learning presented for all families.

Each child will be in a different place in relation to his/her learning as we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for teaching and learning during the coming school year.

The DES has issued curriculum guidelines to all teachers. The guiding principle of these guidelines is “slow down to catch up”. Much emphasis will be placed upon the core subjects of English, Irish and Maths as well as PE and SPHE. Whole class movement breaks and wellbeing activities as well as social games and oral language games will take place daily.

All parents will receive a parental feedback form via email in the coming days. We ask you to consider your concerns and observations of your child’s needs and feed this information back via class email. Social and emotional needs are every bit as important if not more important than academic needs so please consider all areas. Your child’s class email account is their class followed by @scoilbarranaofa.ie, for example [firstclass@scoilbarranaofa.ie](mailto:firstclass@scoilbarranaofa.ie) or [seniorinfants@scoilbarranaofa.ie](mailto:seniorinfants@scoilbarranaofa.ie)

Your child’s class teacher and special education teacher/sna where relevant, will read your feedback and take this information into consideration when planning for the class.

We ask you to trust in our professional expertise as we work with all children during the return to school.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS AND SNAS**

A copy of the SBN Covid Response plan will be provided to substitute teachers and snas. Substitute teachers will be required to complete the Return to Work Form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the DES online training.

Where a teacher is sick a class cannot be split. A substitute teacher will be employed to cover the class/sen teacher or sna. In the event of a substitute teacher not being available to cover a class teacher the DES has advised that other non mainstream teachers should be redeployed to the classroom. In other words the Special Education Teachers act a class teacher should the need arise. A substitute teacher can be hired at a later date to ensure that extra tuition is provided to those children with additional needs that may have missed out on tuition when SETs are covering absences.

## **VISITING COACHES, EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

In the interests of health and safety no visiting coaches or teachers will work in Scoil Barra Naofa for the duration of term 1. Furthermore, after school activities run by school staff, namely homework club/chess club and art, will not take place as these compromise efforts to keep class bubbles separate.

The possibility of facilitating visiting coaches or extra curricular activities will be explored and discussed by the Board of Management in term 2 and reviewed in line with DES guidelines.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS**

In keeping with DES guidelines, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in class support and withdrawal.

Those children diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty will continue to access one to one/small group support as well as in class support.

In an effort to minimise teachers moving between classes Literacy Lift Off, Aistear/Station Teaching are postponed for now. Instead SETs will be allocated a class and will spend a block of time offering in class support to children and working side by side with the class teacher. This will be reviewed after October Mid-Term.

Certain group activities such as social skills groups and typing groups will proceed although at a reduced capacity. As children cannot mix with others outside of their bubble children will not be able to access these groups as regularly as we would have planned, however, we aim to proceed with such groups in the interest of the children's wellbeing and progress.

Cookery will not form part of social skills group for now. This may be reviewed in the future.

Sensory breaks and movement breaks will be offered as whole class activities. Go Noodle, The Body Coach, playground games etc will serve as movement breaks and provide an opportunity to get some fresh air.

Those children with additional needs and access to an SET/SNA may receive incidental sensory breaks during the day if needed, however, use of common spaces and indoor spaces will be restricted and these incidental sensory breaks will take place in the classroom as much as possible.

Those children with sensory needs should use their own “tools” such as Theraputty, Therabands etc. These items cannot be shared amongst children. Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that your child has their own sensory “tools” in their bag daily and these items are cleaned daily. Children should not share these items with others under any circumstances.

## **PLAY**

Play and play based learning is essential to the development of all children. Play will continue to form a key part of teaching and learning in SBN. In younger classes toys, puzzles and equipment will continue to be used on a daily basis. These will be carefully cleaned and sanitised as per HPSC guidelines. Toys and equipment will be rotated between pods on a weekly basis.

PE and games outside will be played daily. PE and sports equipment will be cleaned and sanitised in accordance with HPSC guidelines and will be rotated regularly.

Number and language games, song singing, drama and art will continue to be enjoyed in all classes in SBN. Due consideration and care will be taken when planning for play and active learning.

Children will be free to play with all children in their class bubble when on yard.

Ipads will be used as before and will be cleaned before and after use.

We ask that children do not bring in their own toys or other such items from home.

Dress up activities will not take place for the immediate term but this will be reviewed in line with DES guidelines.

## **SUPPORTING CHILDREN THAT CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL**

Parents of children that fall into the high risk category as per HSE guidelines should inform the Principal as soon as possible. A list of conditions associated with those in the high risk categories can be found on the hse website [www.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www.hse.ie/coronavirus) In these circumstances confirmation from a consultant will be required.

Such vulnerable children will be catered for by schools, however, please keep in mind that no additional resources have been provided to schools for these purposes. Children will be catered for as best as we can within the current staff arrangements.

If your child is required to self isolate and is well or indeed if a class and their teacher is required to self isolate then teaching and learning will take place through regular distance learning methodologies. Gmail, Seesaw and school books will be used for this.

## **UNIFORMS/TRACKSUITS**

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed everyday/replaced by the children's own clothes. This is not practical for most families. We will take a common sense and practical approach to this issue.

As is always the case for the month of September children may wear their "Summer Uniform" i.e. their shorts, polo shirt and track top. The regular school uniform of trousers/pinafores and shirt may also be worn during September should your child/children wish.

We advise parents to ensure your child's uniform is clean and washed regularly. A second pair of shorts or extra polo top may be wise investments to take pressure off you. In this instance a plain polo top is fine. There is no need to buy a polo top with a crest as a spare. Alternatively, if you are washing your child's Summer uniform they can wear their regular school uniform to school.

From October onwards the children should follow the usual practice of wearing full school uniform and tracksuits on tracksuit days only. Infant classes are an exception to this rule and may wear their tracksuit everyday. As washing the tracksuits during the week will be necessary purchasing a second tracksuit would be advisable and I'm sure most infant parents would have bought a second tracksuit for infant children regardless of Covid regulations.

**From October 1st all children from First to Sixth Class should wear their full school uniform on Tuesdays and Thursdays and their full school tracksuit on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Only those children with a genuine medical need may wear tracksuit instead of uniform. In such cases the parent/guardian should apply for permission through the school office by providing confirmation from your GP/Consultant. This application should be made before the end of September and will be discussed/sanctioned by the BOM.**

Wearing tracksuit and uniform on alternate days will provide ample opportunity to wash and dry clothes regularly. We request that school uniform and tracksuit are worn for school related activities only and that uniforms/tracksuits are taken off straight after your child/children arrive home from school.

We ask for your cooperation and understanding in this area. Uniforms, cleanliness relating to uniforms and following uniform/tracksuit days relies on the good will of all and relies on all families taking personal responsibility for ensuring their children's uniforms and tracksuits are washed regularly, worn only for school activities and worn on the correct day. Please help us to instil confidence and reassurance in the school community by adhering to rules relating to uniforms and tracksuits.

## **CONTACT DETAILS & TEXTS**

It is very important that the school is able to contact you in case of illness/emergency. Please ensure that the office has the most up to date contact details, and supply another contact person (childminder / grandparent etc.) if you are unable to take calls. You can also update your details on the Aladdin.

To stay informed of all school related business and events and to receive monthly newsletters please ensure that the school has your up to date email address

## **SCHOOL RULES AND CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**



All schools have been advised to review their Code of Behavior to reflect possible misbehaviours relating to Covid 19 such as lack of regard for physical distancing as well as lack of regard for correct hygiene and respiratory etiquette. The Code of Behaviour will be ratified before school reopens and subsequently shared on the school website.

All parents/guardians sign the Code of Behaviour on enrolling their child at school. Please take the time to read the updated Code of Behaviour when this is available and please take the time to explain to your children, in an age appropriate manner, the serious nature of breaking rules related to physical distancing and hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

## **COMMUNICATING WITH TEACHERS**

Verbal messages, written messages in journals and class email provide opportunity to communicate with your child's class teacher. As our partners in your child's education, the school is always willing to discuss any concerns or questions with parents. Should have a concern or issue that you would like to discuss, remember your **first step** should be to contact the class teacher (as per the school policy).



Parent/Teacher meetings may take place over the phone or be postponed. We will assess the situation closer to the time.

***Thank you for taking the time to read this very comprehensive newsletter – they will not always be this long!! If you have any questions please contact the office.  
Go raibh maith agat!***