

Covid-19 Response plan

Roadmap for reopening Belgrove Junior Boys' School

Parent information

Dear Parents,

No doubt you are as daunted as us by this whole new experience of getting the boys back to school routines, but we will do everything we can to make school as normal and as enjoyable as possible for your sons.

The purpose of this document is to give you an idea of how the control measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 will impact your son's school life.

There are inevitable changes, and things we always took for granted will not be possible for the foreseeable future. The virus is spread by touch so simple things like teachers helping boys with daily self-care tasks (eg putting on/taking off jumpers) will be more difficult than heretofore.

We will need your support to minimise the risk of the introduction of Covid-19 in Belgrove Junior Boys' School and to ensure a safe reopening of our school, so we ask that you read this document carefully. We have included a checklist of practical things you can do to help your son with the transition back to school life.

Morning assembly: Please avoid congestion at the school gate area.

Boys are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school.

If driving, please consider parking further away from the school gate to allow for increased physical distancing.

One parent/guardian should drop boys at the main school gate on Seafield Road and move off quickly.

Parents are not permitted to enter the school yard.

We will have staggered entry by year groups as below*.

8.40 Senior Infants

8.50 1st Class

9.00 2nd Class

*Brothers/boys sharing lifts or walking to school together may enter the school at the same time regardless of year group.

Pupils from the Senior Boys' school should not enter via Junior Boys' gate.

Class teachers will be in their classrooms from 8.40am to receive their boys.

Boys should walk straight to their respective classrooms from the yard.

We will have several members of staff in the yard to ensure all boys get safely to their classrooms.

Separate arrangements for new Junior Infants:

Class teacher and SNA (Mary) will remain in classrooms.

One parent/guardian per pupil will bring the boy into the yard.

Several staff members will be in the yard to guide the boys to their line-up areas.

Staff will bring boys from the yard into their classroom in groups of 4 or 5.

We ask that parents leave the yard promptly.

9.10 Room 1

9.20 Room 3

9.30 Room 5

The above arrangements will be in place until 11th September and we will update you before then.

Room 11 will have separate arrangements which will be communicated to the boys' parents by their teacher, Kate Martin.

Hand sanitizing:

Teachers will ensure that all boys wash or sanitise hands on entering the classroom.

As noted in the Public Health Advice "Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a sanitiser (when hands look clean)".

Boys should also sanitise hands after coughing or sneezing.

Pods:

Boys in our school setting may sit and work in close proximity to a small group (of around 6 boys) known as a pod and the pods will remain same until Christmas.

On arriving at school, each boy will go straight to his pod and must remain in the same pod for the duration of the school day.

There will be a minimum of 1m between pods and 1m from teacher's table. (2m if possible)

As we will not be able to use coat hangers, there will be a box to store coats under each pod.

Life in the classroom:

We will supply each boy with his own pack of stationery which must remain in school. Boys will not be permitted to share stationery.

Teachers will ensure all books and equipment used by each pod are stored separately.

Where communal equipment is used, it will remain with the same pod and will only be used by another pod after being sterilized or set aside for 72 hours quarantine period.

Teachers will avoid activities that involve movement/interaction between pods.

We are advised to keep all rooms well ventilated right through the year, so you may like to give your son an extra layer of clothing to keep him warm if the weather is cold.

Access to other areas of the school:

Apart from yard breaks, boys will be taught in their classrooms for the duration of the school day.

Use of the hall will not be possible so PE will have to take place outdoors.

Teachers may take classes outdoors where/when possible.

Visiting the school library is not an option for the foreseeable future.

Toilets:

Please remind your son to wash his hands thoroughly after going to the toilet.

We will revert to using paper towels so your son will not need to bring a hand towel to school this year.

Please leave spare underwear, trousers and socks in a plastic bag in your son's schoolbag in the event of him having a toilet accident or getting wet in the yard.

Lunches:

Teachers will ensure boys wash/sanitise their hands before eating.

Boys will not be permitted to share lunches (as per usual).

Please ensure that your son can open and close his lunch box and drinks bottle.

Staff will not be able to touch your son's lunch so please ensure that your son is able to unwrap all his lunch items eg peel oranges, bananas, open frubes etc

The school milk will be discontinued this year.

Boys will not be permitted to fill or refill water bottles from school taps.

Teachers will ensure boys will wash/sanitise hands after eating and before going to yard.

Yard:

Please ensure your son can put on, zip up and take off his own coat independently.

The yard will be cordoned off into 3 separate sections using barriers.

The 3 classes from each year group will share break times.

Each class will be given a designated zone in which to play, and boys may interact with all of their own classmates while in the yard.

Class bubbles will be supervised by the class teacher or a member of staff allocated to that class bubble.

Boys will not be permitted to play with toys or materials in the yard, so please leave toys, Match Attacks cards etc at home.

The water fountain will not be in operation.

Room 11 will use the garden near the pond for breaks.

First aid:

Each yard zone will have its own first-aid station.

An injured boy will be treated by his class teacher or a staff member allocated to his class.

Separate first-aid kits and ice packs will be supplied to each class bubble.

Wet day breaks:

Boys will remain in their pods in their classroom and will be supervised by the class teacher or by a staff member allocated to that class.

Office/Reception:

Parents will not be permitted to enter the school without an appointment.

If a boy forgets his lunch a parent should inform the office of this by phone and arrangements will be made.

Dismissal:

This will be staggered by year groups to prevent congestion.

Collection times until 11th Sept as follows:

12.00 Junior Infants

1.10 Senior Infants

1.20 1st Class

2.20 2nd Class

A one-way system will be in operation as follows:

We ask that one collector per boy (or group of boys) enters through the old blue gates, goes through the hall and out the top corridor door into the yard.

Boys will be in their usual collection areas.

The collector should make contact with the class teacher as usual (from a distance of 2m) and should then accompany the boy out through the main gate.

If there is a delay in collecting a boy, he will be supervised by his class teacher.

We encourage creches/collectors with groups of children to avoid bringing large groups with them into yard where possible.

Communication with parents:

Heretofore teachers and parents may have discussed minor issues after school in the yard but as this is no longer possible, teachers will contact parents by phone or email should the need arise.

If you wish to speak to your son's teacher or SET, we ask you to do so by phone or email.

Symptoms of Covid-19:

HSE.ie states that common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss or change to 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

Please assess your son for symptoms every morning

Do not send a child to school with any COVID symptoms.

Do not send a child to school after contact with a confirmed case.

Please seek advice from your GP if in any doubt.

If a staff member or pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

We will use the stage (in the PE hall) to isolate any suspected case of Covid-19.

An unwell pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained.

Ideally the class teacher or other staff in that class bubble will accompany the child.

If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone.

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

A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic.

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

If the staff member/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.

Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport should not be used to travel home.

If the staff member/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.

The Principal will inform the HSE of any suspected case.

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

The school will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.

Checklist for parents prior to reopening.

- Please ensure all your contact details are up to date.
- Ensure your son is able to wash and dry his hands correctly.
- The school will provide hand sanitizer. Young children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel so please do not send any sanitiser with your son.
- Only essential items should be brought to school. (No toys, pencils, books, show-and-tell items etc).
- Ensure your son can put his coat on and off and zip it up and down unaided. Practise now!
- Ensure your son can put his jumper on and off unaided.
- Please label coats and jumpers.
- Boys should not wear laced shoes unless they are proficient at tying laces. Velcro shoes are preferable.

- Ensure your son is well able to manage his lunch. Practise opening/closing lunch-boxes and drinks bottles. Please do not give lunches with packaging that your son cannot manage independently (frubes, cheese strings, sealed plastic packets, cartons etc), and if sending oranges or bananas make sure your son can peel them independently.
- Ensure lunch box and drinks bottles are thoroughly washed every day.
- If parents want to wash uniforms on a daily basis, boys may attend in ordinary clothes if the uniform is not ready.
- Where possible, put in place emergency childcare supports.
- Always heed public health advice and warnings.
- Talk to your child about the changes encountered when returning to school.

Reopening our school: Health & Safety measures

Underlying principles

The Board of Management of Belgrove Junior Boys NS acknowledge and accept its responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all members of the school community – pupils, parents/guardians and staff. The following safety measures have been adopted by the Board to better ensure that it 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 (DES), it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week. While it may not be possible to eliminate the risk of infection, with the co-operation of all members of our school community it is possible to minimise the risk of COVID-19 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 COVID-19 health and safety measures can be implemented.

Assumptions

This Roadmap for return assumes that all children will return to school on Tuesday 1st September 2020 when the school will fully reopen.

When boys return to school, there will be a particular emphasis on Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), mental health and wellbeing and Physical Education.

A Lead Worker Representative (LWR) and an Assistant Lead Worker Representative (ALWR) have been appointed to advise management and staff and to monitor compliance with Covid 19 control measures in the school.

We will review our existing emergency procedures involving evacuation procedures and first aid to consider any new risks arising from the implementation of our Covid 19 health & safety measures.

No adult, other than a staff member, should enter the school without an appointment.

Hygiene and respiratory etiquette

It is crucial that all school staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

COVID-19 posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. These are intended to inform and remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of COVID-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

Regular and thorough cleaning of hands with soap and water or with hand sanitiser will be implemented in line with health guidance. Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers will be available at multiple locations within the school and in each classroom.

Contact tracing

A COVID-19 Contact Tracing Log will be used to support Health Service Executive (HSE) tracing. There will be a system in place for all visitors who need to come to the school to make an appointment and to record their visit using the Contact Tracing Log.

Cleaning

A revised and expanded cleaning and sanitising regime will be implemented. Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces will be conducted, in particular, toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly throughout the day.

There will be regular and frequent collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

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. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre).

It is recommended by the Department of Education and Skills that primary school teachers and staff wear face coverings where a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. Face coverings and face visors will be made available to staff.

Children will not be required or requested to wear face coverings.

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by staff or pupils is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

Teaching and Learning

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be at a different place in relation to his learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 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 during the return to school. We will be focusing initially on wellbeing and getting the children used to the new routines.

Wellbeing of the School Community

We will 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 a Special Ed. teacher) will liaise with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) and suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Special Education

Learning support will be provided using a blended approach of in-class and withdrawal support. Where possible, the provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within two bubbles only although this may not be possible in all cases.

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

Where children receive support in one of the Special Ed. rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group where possible.

When working with a boy with SEN and social distancing is not possible, the teacher will wear a face covering.

The tables and chairs in the Special Ed. rooms will be wiped clean after each use.

School Facilities / Extra-curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities are temporarily suspended while the new routine is established. We recognize that these activities are an important component of the children's development and will endeavour to re-establish these activities as soon as it is safe to do so on the advice of HSE.