**22nd June 2020**

**Dear Parent/Guardian,**

**August Arrangements**

Please find an update on arrangements for your child’s return to school in August. The details are correct at the time of writing but they are subject to change over the coming weeks.

**School Building and Playground**

The building has been thoroughly cleaned in preparation for children and staff returning to work. A sanitizing station has been created at the main entrance and classrooms with sinks have been provided with antibacterial wash. Regular handwashing will continue for all children.

The classrooms within the school have been adapted to accommodate children and staff while observing a 2m distance. Excess furniture has been removed.

A new tray has been bought for each child and each has been labelled and filled with new stationery etc.

Mr Feeney and I have liaised with NLC contractors in order to create coloured zones within the playground. The colours and relevant signage will be identical across NLC school estates. The zones will be painted over the next few weeks. Your child will be allocated a zone in which to line up each morning and this will be communicated to you in due course.

Within the building signage will indicate the direction of travel for all to follow. A one-way system will NOT be in place due to the location of the children’s toilet facilities.

**NLC Model**

At the time of writing to you, the NLC model allows for **two days** of direct teaching for each child. Your child will be allocated **two consecutive days**: Monday/Tuesday **or** Thursday/Friday. Wednesday morning will be used by staff to work with specific individuals and/or groups. Wednesday afternoon will be used by staff for planning.

**Classrooms, Stage Groups and Staffing**

Our classrooms vary in size; for example several can accommodate nine children and one can accommodate fifteen children. During the course of the last few weeks staff have collaborated to create working groups of children, taking cognizance of families and we have managed to keep siblings together at present.

In order to accommodate the children for two days each week I have asked for part of the annexe building to be returned to the school and I am waiting for final confirmation of this. In common with many schools, I have asked for some additional staffing in order to deliver this model.

The days allocated to your child will be emailed to you on/before Wednesday 24th June **subject to** the use of the annexe **and** staffing being confirmed. In all probability it will be very difficult to change days due to the necessity of keeping sibling groups together and I appreciate your patience and forbearance with this.

Please check your inbox regularly in addition to your spam folder and the school website. Where possible, I will include the name of your child’s teacher – however I am still waiting on confirmation of staffing – therefore this could be subject to change before August. I will keep you informed of any changes.

**Curriculum**

I do not underestimate the great difficulties many of you have encountered in home-schooling while trying to work over the last few months. I also know that many of you are worried about your child’s engagement with home-learning and subsequent progress. Please be assured that our staff are preparing to welcome your child back to school and that they will support each and every one of them fully as they return to the school setting.

Initially staff will concentrate on a core curriculum of Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Wellbeing (including P.E.) and Religious Education. Staff may also use interdisciplinary learning (a theme) as a context for learning. More information will be sent to you by staff once the children return to school.

**Practical Information**

**Uniform**

We intend to maintain school uniform during this period. Current advice suggests that clothing should be laundered daily in order to suppress the virus and I would ask that you to do this – particularly in respect of ties. Please label all items clearly so that you can be confident that any lost items can be returned to you. Our uniform provider is Logoxpres and I have uploaded a uniform guide and flyer onto the website for your information.

**Please note:** you can buy uniform from **any retailer** of your choice.

**P.E. Uniform**

Once the children have returned to school, your child’s teacher will inform you of P.E. days. At present children will be able to wear P.E. items to school **on that day** to avoid the necessity of changing in school and to limit unnecessary travel within the building. Until further guidance is provided, P.E. activities will be non-contact activities – e.g. workouts, Zumba sessions etc. and might take place outside.

**Outdoor Wear**

Please be aware that schools have been advised that children should NOT be brought into the building first thing in the morning due to inclement weather. Therefore your child should have appropriate outdoor wear and shoes each day.

**Brands**

Please **do not** buy expensive **brand items** for your child. Children should wear sensible outdoor jackets and schools shoes – and **not** trainers. In November 2017 we had a case of bullying where a child was picked on for ‘not having the right jacket.’ The child in question was really upset, embarrassed and did not want to come to school. As a school community - staff, children and parents, we spent a great deal of time and effort in addressing this. It was agreed by all that brands would not be permitted; in so-doing this brings our school into line with the high school.

Therefore, I am appealing to you as parents to help us to prevent such a situation occurring again.

**Schoolbags, water bottles, snacks and packed lunches**

Your child can bring a schoolbag to school. It will be kept beside him/her for the duration of the day. Your child should bring a **full** water bottle, labelled with his/her name each day. The communal water fountain will not be used.

Snacks and packed lunches can be brought to school but they should be placed inside the schoolbag. Items of stationery: pencil cases, coloured pencils/pens etc. should NOT be brought to school as these will be provided for your child.

**Cafeteria**

The cafeteria will be in operation. At present, I do not know if menu choices will be reduced. Children in Primaries 1 – 3 are entitled to free school meals. Children in Primary 4 upwards will **not** be able to use the cafeteria cash machine to pay for lunch. Please use the online facility to top up your child’s card. Login details will be provided for parents of the new Primary 4 cohort in due course. If you are unable to use the online facility, please place money in a sealed envelope with your child’s full name written clearly on the front and send it with your child into the school where it will be uploaded by cafeteria staff.

**Please note:** if your child is moving to Primary 4 and should be entitled to free school meals, please ensure that you apply appropriately.

**Breakfast Club**

At present I do not know if the school-based breakfast club will be operational in August.

**School Transport**

I believe that school transport will be operational. I do not have any details at present and I imagine that you will be contacted by SPT directly.

**Next Steps**

* Days and groups to be emailed once confirmation of annexe use and staffing have been confirmed (hopefully on/before Wednesday 24th June)
* Information in respect of zone arrangements for morning drop-offs to be emailed (end-July/August)
* Information in respect of collecting children at the end of the school day (end-July/August)

**Conclusion**

There are probably many more questions requiring answers and I will keep you updated throughout the summer.

Please know that I appreciate all that you have done to support your child and the school since lockdown began in March. I would like to thank you for your continuing efforts.

I would also like to thank all of our staff: teaching staff, office staff, support staff, cleaning staff, Mr Feeney and Fr. Campbell for all that they have done to support the children and the school in recent months.

I hope that you have enjoyed the Primary 1 video clips and messages from Primary 6 in support of the new Primary 1 intake. Please log on to the website for, ‘Wishing-you-well Wednesday’ as we remember all of our Primary 7 children who will be leaving us and moving to high school. More information will be sent to parents of Primary 7 children directly in respect of hoodies etc.

In the meantime, thank you once again and remember to check your email, spam folders and the school website regularly in the coming days and weeks for updates before the children return to school in August.

I hope that you and your families remain safe and well over the coming weeks and I look forward to seeing the children back in school in August.

Kind Regards

S. McKinney

Head Teacher