

St. Conleth & Mary's NS,
Newbridge, Co. Kildare.
Roll no: 17872F



Telephone: 045-431179
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5 January 2022

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

We hope you had a lovely Christmas break, and we are happy to be re-opening as planned tomorrow, Thursday the 6th of January.

We will continue to take all reasonable precautions to keep the school open safely and to implement best practices to mitigate the risks associated with Covid-19. As you are no doubt aware one of the key measures in aiming to reduce the spread of Covid-19 is to provide adequate ventilation. This means that classroom windows are open and with the anticipated cold weather I would encourage children to wear extra layers coming to school.

As I am sure you know, the Covid-19 situation nationally is increasingly difficult at the moment. Although it appears that the Omicron variant is milder and causing less serious illness for most people, it is spreading rapidly across all age groups in Ireland currently. Since September 2020, we have had to manage high levels of staff absences due to Covid-19, self-isolation rules, restricted movement rules, close contact rules, and non-Covid related absences. Unfortunately, we expect the level of absenteeism to be even higher in the coming weeks as more and more people test positive or are identified as close contacts, alongside the continued non-Covid related absences. We are doing everything in our power to keep the school open, however there is a high likelihood of changes to your child's class teacher, SNA or support teacher in the coming weeks.

As a last resort, it may at times be necessary to close a classroom or classrooms due to lack of staffing, or if advised to do so by public health. Please be assured that this will be our last resort. We will try to give you as much notice as possible if this must occur, however these decisions may have to be taken late at night or early in the morning before the school opens. We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause over the coming weeks, but the health and safety of our students and staff will continue to be our top priority, as it has been throughout the pandemic.

Continued support from our families will be crucial this year as we face more obstacles due to the global pandemic. We appreciate your support in implementing Covid-19 guidelines at home as we implement them in school. Please find the most recent advice from the HSPC in relation to numerous possible Covid-19 scenarios and how they should be managed. There have been some updates to this since advice before the Christmas holidays, especially in relation to antigen testing, and children not returning to school until they are 48 hours symptom free (regardless of a negative antigen result). This is the advice that the school has to implement upon our return and has been designed by the HSE and HSPC to keep us all as safe as possible.

The key symptoms to look out for in relation to Covid-19 have been updated as follows:

Principal: Mr. Bryan Lynch

Deputy Principal: Ms. Aisling Romano



- *fever of 38.0°C or higher without another medical reason (such as chickenpox or a urine infection) OR*
- *new cough or difficulty breathing or worsening of an existing breathing problem, OR*
- *loss of sense of smell, change in sense of taste, or loss of sense of taste (if your child is able to say this) OR*
- *other minor breathing or chest problems in a child who has been in contact with an ill person, is part of an outbreak or is a contact of someone who has COVID-19*
- *Other symptoms associated with COVID-19 include fatigue, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis, sore throat, headache, muscle/joint pain, skin rash, nausea or vomiting, diarrhoea, chills or dizziness.*
- Symptoms may present differently in different age groups and with different variants of the virus. Some symptoms may also be confused with common cold, hay-fever or flu.
- If you have any new acute symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, self-isolate and contact your GP.
- However, if you or your child's symptoms are very mild then stay at home, reassess after 48 hours and contact your GP for advice.

Latest guide for children aged under 13:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/algorithms/Isolation%20quick%20guide%20under%2013s.pdf>

Latest guide for adults & children from their 13th birthday: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/factsheetsandresources/Isolation%20quick%20guide%20Adults%20and%20children%20from%20their%2013th%20birthday.pdf>

HSE Scenario Flow Chart:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GgxEHwO4usQKy0mARs2WECHyxFI65AZw/view?usp=sharing>

We appreciate your continued support in following these protocols. We understand that they can be disruptive, however keeping a child at home for two or three days to allow them to recover from a minor illness, and/ or seeking a doctor's advice in relation to any Covid-19 symptoms, can help us to prevent outbreaks in the school and any closures associated with that. Please seek medical advice from your GP or out of hours service if you have any concerns about your son/ daughter possibly displaying symptoms of Covid-19.

I would like to remind all parents/guardians that pupils in 3rd, 4th 5th & 6th class are required to wear face masks in classrooms. Child sized disposable face masks are available in all classrooms. I would also like to remind everyone that face masks should be worn when on the school premises.

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We are greatly looking forward to seeing our pupils back as planned tomorrow. School begins at 9.10am as normal with pupils being admitted to classrooms from 9am. If your child is currently unable to return to school due to a positive Covid-19 test or being identified as a close contact, please let us know by emailing office@stconlethandmarys.ie.

We hope to see as many of you as possible tomorrow.

Kind regards,
Bryan Lynch