

Practical Questions and Answers for all Families



Carrakennedy
National
School

The safe return to school for all pupils and staff is our top priority. We have put together this document to answer some common queries around the re-opening of our school. If you have any other questions or queries over the next few days, please do not hesitate to make contact with us. We are really looking forward to seeing everyone back in Carrakennedy NS next week.

1. What are class bubbles and pods and how are they formed?

Each classroom is termed a bubble. In our school we have a Junior Room Bubble and a Senior Room Bubble. Pods are formed within the classroom bubble. As a two-teacher school, we are lucky that the children have always worked in pods/class groupings.

Pods will be as follows:

- Junior and Senior Infants (7 children)
- 1st and 2nd Class (7 children)
- 3rd Class (7 children)
- 4th Class (6 children)
- 5th and 6th Class (9 children)

It is also important to note that Pods are a requirement from 3rd – 6th Class, as an additional physical distancing measure. Pods are not strictly a requirement from Infants – 2nd Class, however they are considered a supplementary control measure. We are implementing the pod system across the school to ensure a consistent classroom management approach to physical distancing.

2. How will the children play at break time?

Class bubbles will not mix on yard. Children will be given a designated area for their pod to play in.

3. Will there be staggered lunch breaks?

No. All children will be on yard as normal. Our school grounds and numbers allow for this.

4. Do children wear masks?

Children are not required to wear masks at primary level. The current health advice in the Roadmap for the Full Reopening of Schools, is that cloth masks are not appropriate for children under the age of 13 years. We appreciate however, that some parents may wish to provide a mask for their child to wear, due to family reasons or particular health concerns. This is at the parent's discretion and a personal control measure that the school will not have responsibility for.

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5. Will there be different drop-off and pick-up times?

No- drop-off and pick-up times will be as normal. School gates will open at 9.20am and children will enter the school via their designated gate and door.

- ❖ **Junior Room** will enter the school grounds via the staff gate and will enter the school via the PE Hall door.
- ❖ **Senior Room** will enter the school grounds via the swing gates and will enter the school via the main door.

Infants will finish at 2pm and 1st to 6th Class pupils at 3pm. Junior Infants will finish at 12.30pm for the first week.

Under the current guidelines, it is important to note that parents are not permitted beyond the school gate at drop-off and collection times.

6. Are children required to change their uniform daily?

There has been no guidance from the DoES regarding school uniforms. Current research indicates that Covid-19 does not survive well on soft surfaces like fabrics.

One option is to alternate between different sets of uniforms. If a uniform has already been worn but is still visibly clean, it could be put away for up to 24 hours, which would minimise transmission of the virus. For example, Monday's uniform could be worn again on Wednesday. Parents should use their own judgement regarding washing uniforms. It is best to wash them as per the care label instructions. A steamer or disinfectant spray could be useful. We hope this will work for families but please be assured that if on occasion your child is not in full uniform we will be very understanding.

Junior Room PE days will be Monday, Wednesday and Friday and Senior Room PE day will be Friday.

7. Can my child bring their own sanitizer to school?

The DoES has provided funding and a procurement framework to supply hand sanitizer to all the schools. We have selected a supplier and a particular sanitizer and each class will have their own supply. Children do not need to have their own sanitizer. However, there is no issue if parents would like their child to keep a little bottle of sanitizer in their school bags, for emergencies or for when on the bus etc.

8. My child has sensitive skin and I'm concerned about the hand sanitizer used in the school. Will there be sanitizer for sensitive skin?

It is important to let us know about any skin sensitivities children may have. We have procured child-friendly sanitiser and soap, but should your child develop a reaction, please contact the school.

9. How will school toilets be managed?

As is normal, children will use their own classroom toilet. Strict social-distancing and hand-hygiene rules will apply. This will be taught to the children during the first week. All toilets, sinks and taps will

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be cleaned daily. Toilets will also benefit from our whole-school Ozone Sanitisation system on a daily basis.

10. What happens if my child has an appointment and needs to be taken out of school?

Please notify us of any appointment by note or phonecall. Please ring the bell and wait outside for your child. A staff member will accompany your child to the front door.

11. What is the procedure for managing a suspected case?

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.

The following outlines how Carrakennedy NS will deal with a suspected case that may arise in the school:

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately;
- Isolate the person and accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask.
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used; Advise the parent/guardian on the next steps- ringing their GP to assess for a Covid test, communicating with the school the outcome of the GP consultation.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect;
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved;
- The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a

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diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times;

- Pupils must isolate at home if waiting for a test or the outcome of a test and can only return to school once the school has confirmation of a negative test or certification from the GP that the child can safely return to school.

Isolation Rooms:

The Learning Support room has been assigned as a designated isolation area within the school. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. In such circumstances the PE Hall will be immediately vacated and used accordingly. If someone is isolating in the PE Hall, the junior pupils will use another route to enter/exit the school.

12. Will all the children in the pod/bubble need to be tested if there is a positive case of Covid-19 within the class?

The HSE will provide guidance to the school in the event of a positive case and advise about isolating/testing etc.

13. Will the whole school have to close if there's a positive case?

This remains unclear- we are still awaiting guidance from the DoES. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis and the HSE will direct the school on how to proceed.

14. Will there be temperature screening?

No, it is not part of the protocol to implement regular temperature screening in school. However, it is often part of our First Aid procedures to check a child's temperature if they are unwell. If a child becomes unwell in class and it is appropriate to check their temperature, we will do this as we assess their condition before phoning a parent. We ask parents to be vigilant regarding temperature checks if your child is feeling unwell.

15. What about lunchboxes and water bottles?

It is recommended that lunch boxes and water bottles are washed thoroughly after each school day. If children are availing of the school lunches, we would ask that they bring a lunch box to school so that any uneaten food can be brought home with them each day.

School lunches will resume in week 2. This will enable us to give out and collect order forms during week 1 and to plan the school lunch scheme accordingly.

16. What does my child need in their school bag?

- Lunchbox and Water bottle
- Homework Folder (Mesh Bag)

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