

## Parents'/Guardians' FAQs on School Reopening

This is the most important piece of advice we can give you:

**No person (child, teacher or parent) should attend school if unwell**

**or**

**if any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.**

*Please heed this advice!*

### **Will there be a map to show the different entry/exit routes?**

Yes, it can be found here: <https://www.patricianprimaryschool.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PPS-Entry-Exit-Map.pdf>

### **Will the specific entry doors be marked A,B,C, etc.?**

Yes, the doors have been marked and signposted. If you walk down Chapel Lane, you can see most of them from the footpath. You cannot see Door E (the 4<sup>th</sup> Class and 6<sup>th</sup> Class door) from the path (this door is in the Bus/Bike yard; the children will know it).

### **Will the pupil's exit point be the same as their entrance point?**

Yes, the pupils will enter and exit through the same doors and gates.

### **For how long will the chalk line be on the ground to help guide the children from their entrance gate to their entrance door?**

We will keep this line in place for the first week of school, until Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September.

### **What can be done for parents who are away for the 2<sup>nd</sup> class parents meeting?**

With the new restrictions in place, our plans for 2<sup>nd</sup> Class meetings have been disrupted. We will try to put something in place, but we may be forced to communicate via the website.

### **What is the return-to-school process for a child at home after developing symptoms?**

At present (19<sup>th</sup> August 2020), the situation is this: all parents/guardians will be expected to follow all public health advice before returning their child to school. Parents/Guardians have a huge responsibility to follow public health advice and, in doing so, keep the virus out of schools. You are asked to familiarise yourself with Covid-19 symptoms and the relevant public health advice. See the HSE website for or more information <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

### **Does a parent need a negative test result for their child to return to school? Or alternatively stay at home for two weeks?**

If your child was displaying symptoms of Covid-19, then prior to returning to school, the school asks that the parent/guardian provides written confirmation that they have no reason to believe that the child is infectious and have followed all medical and public health guidance.

### **Will there be choir or band in school this year?**

Initially, there will be no choir or band. Our main aim now is to get the school day up-and-running. Hopefully, these activities will return in due course. We will keep this under review.

### **Will there be extra-curricular sports in school this year?**

Initially, there will be no extra-curricular sports. Our main aim now is to get the school day up-and-running. Hopefully, these activities will return in due course. We will keep this under review.

**Are masks to be worn in the classrooms/corridors/bathrooms/outdoor settings?**

At present (19<sup>th</sup> August 2020) it is not recommended by the Dept. Of Education that primary school pupils wear face masks. We will not be going against this recommendation. However if you want your child to wear a mask or your child wants to wear a mask they will be allowed.

If your child does wear a mask, the school will not be responsible for ensuring the child keeps his/her mask on or wears it properly at all times etc. but the option is there for children to wear a mask.

Please ensure your child has a plastic zip locked bag/freezer bag that they can put their mask in when they are not wearing it.

If wearing a mask becomes a distraction to a child's learning, the school may request that it is not used, or that the parent/guardian speaks with their child about correct use. The school reserves the right to revoke permission for mask wearing, should it become a persistent problem.

**I am worried that my child has fallen behind in their schoolwork. Will there be help in school? Should I get grinds for my child?**

This is a natural concern and is shared by many parents. The Dept. Of Education have issued Curriculum Guidance to all schools and we will work from this. We will take into account that the children have been out of the classroom for an extended period and their learning may not be where they would be if it was a 'normal' time. We will do the very best we can to give all our pupils the help they need. Unfortunately, the current situation has left us with no more teachers than we had before, so we will have to make the best of what we've got.

As for grinds, that would be a personal decision and I wouldn't stand in any parent's way, if they felt it was best for their child. However, I would be inclined to say, in the main, to hold fire. Children can surprise with you with how much they can absorb, they can learn at a quicker rate than adults, so I'd give them a while yet before I'd go and get them grinds.

**My child is quite anxious about returning to school. Is there anything I can do?**

Again, this would be quite normal. I would advise you to chat with your child about the return to school, trying to keep it lighthearted and focus on reassurance. Wellbeing will be part of our teaching as the children get readjusted to the classroom. Once they are back amongst their friends, children will get a 'bounce' from that, as you probably saw when they started going back out playing with their friends. Initially, the classroom will be a 'shock' and there may well be tears on the first day (bringing back memories of Junior Infants), but after a few weeks, they should have settled back in and the social aspect of school will bring them on. As I'm on the topic, parents will probably also be anxious about the return. This is perfectly natural too but I would ask you to have confidence in the school and try to instill this confidence in your child. Children pick up on mood quite quickly; if you're confident and positive about it, they're more likely to be confident and positive about it too.

**We are currently abroad. Can my child return to school on September 1<sup>st</sup>?**

The school will expect all parents/guardians to follow public health advice in this regard. Official public health advice continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone. It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of 'normal precautions' (" the green list"), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school staff, parents and children coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible.

**Both parents are working and both of us would find it difficult to take time off. What do we do if our child has symptoms the night before/the morning of school?**

In this case, it would be vital that parents keep the child at home and follow all public health advice. I know it will cause problems with work, but this cooperation is needed if we are to keep the virus out of schools.

**Will the school inform all parents if there has been a positive case of Covid-19 in the school?**

No. The school cannot divulge any such information, unless instructed to do so by the HSE. This is not a school decision; we are bound by law. If a positive case is identified, the HSE public health process essentially takes over. 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 diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times. I understand that parents may be anxious to know but the school cannot, in any circumstances, contravene these legal requirements.

**Will the children still be able to go out on the yard at break times?**

Yes, the children will get the same time on the yard as normal. The only difference is we are staggering the breaks, so they will not all take their break at the same time. When they go out on yard, they can play with children from other pods within their bubble, but they cannot play with children from other bubbles.

**Will homework be given?**

In an effort to ease the transition for pupils returning to school, there will not be an emphasis placed on homework. With that in mind, there will be no homework for the first week of school, at least. After this, there will be very light homework given.

**Will pupils be bringing home books and copies for homework?**

Pupils will still be able to bring home copies and books from school to do their homework. As mentioned previously, the emphasis for the first number of weeks is to ease the pupils back into school and there will be no homework for the first week of school.

**Where should I collect my child from school?**

While you are still able to collect your child from outside the school gates, we are very mindful of maintaining social distancing and avoiding large crowds of people. For that reason, we strongly recommend parents to organise a meeting/collection point with their child away from the school gates. This will allow for a more even spread of people at 2:50.

Here are a number of possible meeting places near the school:

- The park
- The Riverbank
- The church
- The library
- The Gables

### **How can I get a message to the class teacher, now that a 'quick word at the wall' is not a possibility?**

If you need to contact your child's teacher, a note in the journal will do fine. If you feel that your child may not be the most reliable in passing on notes (you'll know your child better than anyone!) you can, in addition to the note, contact the school office, by email or phone. [info@patricianprimary.ie](mailto:info@patricianprimary.ie) or 045-432174

### **What do I do if my child is late for school on any day? Will they be allowed in?**

Yes, they will be allowed in. With all the will in the world, children will be late for school at times. We understand that. If your child is late, they are to enter the school via the Front Door (Door C) and they will be directed to their classroom from there. If the door is not manned, they are to buzz the intercom. We would ask that every effort is made for the first week to have children arrive on time, just to get things off to a smooth start.

*If you have any further questions about school reopening, please email [patricianparents@gmail.com](mailto:patricianparents@gmail.com)*

*We will try to keep this page updated regularly.*

All of the school's back to school plans and advice can be found on

<https://www.patricianprimaryschool.ie/school-life/>

Department of Education advice on returning to school can be found here

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool/>

Protecting Your Child from Coronavirus

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/40e9c-protecting-your-child-from-coronavirus/>

Information for Students and Families About Returning to School

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/>

Back to School Advice for Parents

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2d3af-advice-during-covid-19-back-to-school-advice-for-parents/>

Back to School Advice available in multiple languages

<https://nascireland.org/covid-19-world-service>