



Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa

Two Mile Borris, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

E41 T868

14th August 2020

Dear parents/guardians,

I hope you are enjoying the summer break. We are busy planning for the return to school for all children in Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa on August 31st. Previously, we circulated the government plan for the reopening of schools ([click here](#)). The government website contains details on various aspects of the plan including curricular adaptations for the coming school year. Today, we are releasing the initial protocols for the safe return to school in Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa. We have worked hard to minimise the impact of measures on parents and children in our community.

We need your help in ensuring the return to school is safe for all members of our school community. We request parents/guardians to read the attached document in detail at your convenience. It is essential that everyone is up to date on the plan. However, we await further guidance from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) on a number of issues. This means that the attached document should be considered as a live document. Changes to the plan are inevitable between now and the first day of school and throughout the coming months as we navigate our way through the new reality of school for the foreseeable future.

We hope that the plan reflects the depth of work by Staff and the Board of Management in ensuring a safe return to school for your child/ren. We have setup a dedicated email address to receive questions from the school community. If you have a question about any aspect of the plan, or you feel the plan hasn't covered a particular area, or if you would like to give us feedback on the plan, you can email reopening@scoilmochaomhog.ie Individual queries will not be answered directly, rather we will release a follow-up email next week in response to queries we receive on this email account in a Frequently Asked Questions document.

We look forward to welcoming you all back to Scoil Mochaomhóg Naofa on August 31st. Until then, take care and stay safe.

Le meas,

Michael Ryan

Principal



Return to School Protocols – Guidance to Parents

Guiding Principle

Return to school – to achieve a calm, happy environment which is conducive to delivering a high quality of teaching and learning, whilst observing the appropriate measures to manage the risks associated with Co-Vid19 in our school setting.

1. Structure of standard school day **(Please note that there will be a different procedure for the first day of school – see below)**

Morning Drop Off

School doors will open at 9:10am to receive pupils. Pupils should arrive between 9:10am and 9:20am. All classes will commence at 9:20am. Children should promptly make their way to their classroom using their designated entrance route and must not congregate outside the school.

Parents/guardians/responsible adult drops the child to the school gate (or your child approaches the school gate independently). **Parents are not permitted beyond the front school gate during drop off/collection unless in an emergency.** Access routes will be clearly signposted and staff will be on hand in the first days of school to assist children to access the building.

Junior Infants to 2nd Class enter the school grounds via the main front gate, **using the turnstile on the right hand side of the gate.** The children make their way independently to Door 1 (Main front door) and enter the school.

3rd to 6th Class enter the school grounds via the main front gate, using the **turnstile on the left hand side of the gate.** The children independently make their way to Door 3 (indicated by staff), staying inside the access route (marked with cones) and enter the school.

Children are not permitted on school grounds before 9:10am.

Children/adults must never enter the grounds via the gate to the car park.

Due to government guidelines surrounding congregating, parents are not permitted to enter the school grounds for morning drop off (alternative arrangements will be communicated to parents of Junior Infant pupils for the first days of school).



Afternoon Collection

School finishes for Junior and Senior Infants: 2pm (*alternative arrangements in place for JI for the first two weeks of school*).

School finishes for 1st and 2nd Class: 2:50pm*

School finishes for 3rd & 4th Class: 2:55pm*

School finishes for 5th & 6th Class: 3pm

*This is to limit people congregating during collection time and is intended to be an interim measure.

We understand that parents may have to wait between collection times and we ask that you walk your child back to your car while you wait for older children.

Children will use the same route used for morning drop-off to leave school grounds. Parents are asked not to congregate at the front gate during evening collection. Parents are advised to maintain social distancing during drop off and collection times. We advise parents to collect children from the school side of the road and discourage children from crossing the road. Please avoid the yellow box area at the front of the school.

If you wish, you may give consent to your child to walk home (leave the school grounds without the presence of a parent/guardian/responsible adult at the end of the school day). We are asking parents/guardians to complete the form in advance of reopening. [You can complete the form by clicking here](#)

2.Collection of children during the school day

- All visitors must enter the building via Entrance 1 (Main front door)
- Adults should press the intercom and wait for assistance. Adults will be asked to wait in the porch area.
- A member of staff will acknowledge the adult's presence and bring the child to the front door.
- Adults will be asked to sign the child out
- Adults should not enter past the porch area unless invited to do so by a member of staff
- Parents/guardians will be granted access to the school by strict appointment only. All visitors to the school will be required to provide details for contact tracing.

3.Dropping equipment during the school day

- We will be operating a 'no contact' drop off for parents who need to drop equipment/clothing/lunches/materials to the school. Parents should telephone the office to notify staff that they intend to drop items at the school. Parents should enter via Entrance 1 (main front door) and place items in the drop off box at the door.



- We are requesting parents to utilise the online payment system for paying any monies due to the school in order to limit the handling of cash.

4. Organisation of Teaching and Learning Time

- Children will sit in groups (pods) in the classroom. Class teachers will place the children in their pods at the start of the school year. Pods will be drawn by random lot. It will not be possible to relocate children to different pods. Pod structures will be reviewed following government advice.
- Children will be based in their classroom predominantly.
- Teaching staff will utilise outdoor learning areas as appropriate – this will include the sensory garden, yard at the front of the school, yard at the rear of the school and the community field.

5. Organisation of Break Times

- Each class will be assigned a route to make their way to yard.
- Children will be encouraged to use the toilet prior to yard time in order to limit travelling between different zones on yard.
- Children will play in a designated zone for their class bubble. Children must remain in their class bubble.
- **Fifth and Sixth Classes will be assigned to grass areas until further notice. They will need a change of shoes each day in school (old runners/wellies etc which can be left in school).**
- Supervision – children are supervised by staff at all times.

6. Dealing with a suspected case of Co-Vid19

- Pupils must not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. As per the HSE guidelines, the symptoms of Covid19 are
 - **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**
- Further information can be accessed at <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
- If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following procedures will be implemented:
 - Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
 - The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area (Tír na nÓg Room) via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times



Return to School Protocols – Guidance to Parents

- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. The staff member accompanying the child will use personal protective equipment (PPE) to include a face shield, face mask, apron and gloves.
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP. It is imperative that we have up to date details for your child's GP and emergency contacts.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made 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 diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed.

7.Children who should not attend school

- If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –
- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school (medical certificate will be required).



- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell

8.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 the Special Education Teacher will issue suggested activities to support the child's learning at home. Guidance will be issued by school staff on a case-by-case basis.

9.Personal Equipment

- Hand sanitizer will be funded by the Department of Education and Skills and provided by the school authority for all children. Children do not need to bring hand sanitizer to school unless they wish to do so.
- Children bring their own materials to school (as per school requisites). On the first day of school, the children are requested to bring all their materials to school. They will leave all materials in school from that point. Each day, the children will only bring their school bag, containing their lunch to school. As an interim measure, no equipment will be taken out of the school by children.
- On the first day of school, class teachers will provide labels for children from 1st to 6th Class to place on their equipment. However, parents are asked to label their child's uniform, school bag, lunch box, drinks bottle etc.
- Junior & Senior Infants – equipment will be stored in individual tubs, labelled with the child's name. Sharing of tubs will not be permitted. We ask that parents of children in these classes label all of their child's belongings before the first day of school.
- Children should only bring their schoolbag to school each day which should only contain their lunch and drinks.
- As an interim measure, teachers will not assign homework for the month of September. Children will leave all materials (schoolbooks, pencil cases etc) in school each day so they will only take home their schoolbag.
- Uniforms – As an interim measure, children will wear school uniform/PE uniform on opposite days
Mon, Wed, Fri – PE Uniform
Tues, Thur – Full school uniform
- Coats – children may wish to wear the official school coat on a particular day and an alternative coat on the subsequent day. This is a decision for parents. Parents are not required to purchase



two official school coats. We ask that parents please label their child's coat(s).

- Shoes – children in Junior Infants to 2nd Class must be able to tie their own laces. Alternatively, children may choose Velcro shoes that they can fasten independently.

10.Shared Equipment

- By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared between classes. Whilst the school will limit the sharing of equipment, it will be necessary to share some equipment including iPads, equipment for play etc. Shared equipment will be cleaned after use.
- Play is a central part of curriculum delivery in the infant classes. A cleaning regime will be established for the cleaning of toys each day/week.

11.Special Education Teaching

- Children who meet the requirements for special education teaching under the school's continuum of support will continue to have access. However, the delivery of special education teaching will be adapted to meet the needs of the school.

12.School Assembly

- School assembly will be postponed until further notice.
- Class teachers will award student of the week in their own classroom each Friday.

13.Staff use of PPE

- In line with DES requirements, all staff will be directed to wear a face covering when a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. To avoid upset or confusion, it would be helpful if parents explain this to children in advance of school opening. It may be helpful to make comparisons to masks children see in public and explain that this will be the case for school staff also.

14. Cleaning Protocols

- The Board of Management employs a school cleaner (Jennifer) 5 days each week. We enforce strict cleaning regimes to all classrooms, support rooms and office areas. These measures will be enhanced to reflect the current situation. All high touch areas will be cleaned throughout the school day. All children and staff will be required to use hand sanitizer/wash their hands regularly throughout the school day.



PROCEDURE FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL ONLY (A SEPARATE DOCUMENT WILL ISSUE TO PARENTS OF INCOMING JUNIOR INFANTS AND SENIOR INFANTS IN ADVANCE OF THE FIRST OF DAY OF SCHOOL)

The Board of Management accepts that there is a need for a unique approach on the first day of school. The following protocols will be in place for the first day of school only. Please refer to point 1 above (Structure of standard school day) for protocols for subsequent school days.

The following procedures apply to children in **1ST to 6th Class only**

Staggered Opening Protocols for Day One only

9:10-9:20am Children with **surnames A-O** arrive at school

9:20-9.30am Children with **surnames P-Z** arrive at school

Staggered Closing Protocols for Day One only

11:40-11:50am Children with **surnames A-O** depart school

11:50am-12pm Children with **surnames P-Z** depart school