



Dear Parents,

On Monday July 27th, the Minister for Education announced a Roadmap for the Reopening of all Schools. We have been preparing for some time for this and now that we have the Government Roadmap I wanted to share with you some of our plans for the new school year. We have been working on our plan for the safe reopening of the school for some weeks now and have published the DES COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools on our school website.

The Response Plan gives details of

- Physical preparation, signage, hand sanitiser stations,
- Advice, procedures and training for the safe return to working in the school for all school staff and pupils
- General and specific advice on how all pupils, staff, parents and visitors will prevent the spread of the virus

We have also published our COVID-19 Policy Statement on the school website. Our BoM will keep you informed as to the progress of our re-opening plans and provide you with the information required by you to play your part in safely re-opening the school. With this in mind please check the school website for important updates.

I am delighted to announce that the school will reopen for all students on **Tuesday 1st of September**. We in Carnaross N.S. will endeavor to make school as close to normal as we can. In order to keep us all safe and to ensure that we continue to remain open, there will be some changes to our usual procedures. I ask for your patience, support and understanding with all arrangements. As pupil wellbeing is of the utmost importance, we would encourage all parents to promote a positive attitude with your children about these new procedures. It is very important at all times that we do not make the children feel anxious about returning to school.

Enhanced Cleaning

Before the school opens the school will undergo a deep clean. Each bathroom has soap and paper hand towel dispensers. At entry/exit points and at each classroom hand sanitiser is available. Children will be asked to use hand sanitiser as they enter or exit the building. They will wash their hands at regular intervals during the day, before and after breaks and after they use the toilet. These procedures will be common practice for the pupils in this school.

Maintaining physical distancing while in school.

Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -

Increasing Separation

This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximize physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 4/6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom.

Decreasing Interaction

This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be assigned routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. A school plan outlining these routes along with Guidelines for Parents and pupils will be posted home the week prior to reopening.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school.

Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents asked to collect them from the school.

Your child will be brought to an isolation room. A member of staff will stay with your child until you arrive at school to pick them up. It is very important that you can be contacted. We will advise you then on the next step. These measures are very important as we want to return to school safely and we want to remain open.

Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behavior in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

Specific information on arrival and dismissal procedures will follow.

School Uniform

All children in the school will wear their full school uniform. The government guidelines state that children under the age of 13 are not expected to wear facemasks.

Teachers may use facemasks or face shields in certain circumstances.

At all times we will work hard to minimise any anxiety that could be felt by the children.

Home-School communication

Please ensure that we have your correct contact details. From now on most correspondence will be delivered via text and e mail.

Access to the school building will be in line with Department of Education Guidelines. Visits by parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.

You can always contact the office at office@carnarossns.ie. or by phone at 046 9245598. I can be contacted at the above email or by phone at 087 9984612.

We are all looking forward to going back to school. We have made huge efforts to plan for the reopening including reconfiguring classrooms, installing new equipment and deep cleaning the building. I hope that I have answered many of your questions.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the beginning of September.

I want to thank the staff, the Parents Association and the Board of Management for all of their help and support. This has been a most difficult period for everyone but little by little we are getting there.

Thank you for your continued support.

Dervilla Finnegan

Principal