



Carnaross National School, Kells, County Meath  
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24th February 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope that this letter finds you safe and well. Last night it was announced that the children in Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class would return to school on Monday March 1<sup>st</sup>. Children in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class will stay at home and they will continue to engage with remote learning and zoom calls as before. We hope that they will return to school on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

For the children returning to school we now must ask you to fill out a 'Return to Educational Facility Declaration Form'. I have included the form with this letter and it will also be provided on our school website. This form must be completed and returned via Seesaw before Monday.

Please talk to your child in a positive way about returning to school. We need to normalise the situation as much as possible and keep anxiety levels low. This short video from Department of Education, which can be viewed at this link may be helpful <https://youtu.be/aW9qUCnPAk0>.

Please see the table below as a reminder of the opening and closing times.

Class	Entry Route	Exit Route	Entry Time	Exit Time
Junior Infants	Right Stile/ Main Door	Right Stile/ Main Door	8.50-9.00am	1.40pm
Senior Infants	Right Stile/ Main Door	Right Stile/ Main Door	8.50-9.00am	1.40pm
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	Right Stile / Main Door	Right Stile/ Main Door	8.50-9.00am	2.30pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Right Stile/ Main Door	Right Stile/ Main Door	8.50-9.00am	2.40pm
Bus Children	Stiles	Stiles	9.10am	2.20pm

Please familiarise your child with this plan before returning to school.

We would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation and that of the entire Board of Management, for the considerable extra work and personal sacrifices made by all of our parents and staff, in order to maintain a degree of teaching and learning during this time. This dedication has also been in evidence in adhering to the extra safety measures while the school was open prior to Christmas. We have no doubt that this compliance will continue as we re-open the school.

Public health informs us that 'schools are safe' and the evidence does show that transmission in schools, both to children and adults, has been very low compared to other settings. However, there can be no absolute guarantee that schools can be totally Covid safe in relation to the spread of the virus within the school community. The Board of Management will continue to work to make our

school as safe as possible, through the stringent implementation of infection control measures and by putting key safety measures in place to deal with the identified concerns, in order to eliminate transmission risks where possible.

Such measures include:

- All relevant policies and practices are in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in line with the Government's "Work Safely Protocol". Our Covid-19 Response Plan and risk assessment are our commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff, pupils and others who visit the school. The results of the risk assessment and any new or enhanced safety measures to be implemented have been shared with staff.
- A pre-return-to-work form has been completed by all staff in advance of returning to work.
- Staff and pupils who are feeling unwell should stay at home.
- The concerns and needs of vulnerable and at-risk staff will be managed in line with approved policy and procedures.
- Staff are being provided with all necessary PPE in accordance with identified Covid-19 exposure risks and in line with public health advice.
- Where possible, teachers and SNA staff stay with the same bubble of pupils.
- There are adequate Covid-19 signage and floor stickers on display throughout the school. Visible signage is in place that identifies general cleaning protocols, processes, and practices.
- Appropriate social distancing is maintained and necessary controls are in place to reduce transmission risks. Appropriate dispersion measures are used at all entrances and exits.
- Where dedicated school transport (school bus) is required for pupils to attend school the Board of Management expects that all transport providers will comply with all relevant advice and guidance issued by the government and public health along with any other arrangements put in place as part of the school's own Covid Response Plan, based on the school's own health and safety review.
- Additional supervision is being provided when pupils are arriving/leaving school grounds while using school transport and/or taxis to comply with social distancing requirements.
- The school maintains a log of contacts to facilitate contact tracing.
- Specific procedures are in place for the reception of goods and deliveries.
- Digital tools and communication systems are used as an alternative to face-to-face meetings.
- There is a system in place to keep staff, pupils and parents up-to-date with the latest public health advice and the Board of Management has taken swift action to implement all recommended public health measures as they are updated. Regular and transparent briefings/communications are provided to staff and parents.
- Appropriate cleaning, hand washing and hygiene procedures are in place. There is also a cleaning schedule of any surfaces or equipment that is shared or used regularly by staff and pupils.
- There is a plan in place as to what needs to be done if a staff member or pupil develops Covid symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) while at school. All staff and pupils are aware of the relevant steps and procedures
- Staff and pupil safety is a priority at all times and anyone who expresses a safety concern is listened to with empathy and understanding. Health and wellbeing are at the centre of our decision making.

The Board of Management will continue to communicate regularly with staff and parents and we request that you keep yourself updated with all communications, giving the ever-changing nature of

this pandemic. Each of us needs to take personal responsibility for our actions in relation to Covid-19 and we must all work together to ensure the safety of every child and adult in our school community. **We would remind all members of the school community of the dangers of spreading this virus through congregation of groups of people. Please be mindful of this in relation to dropping off and collecting children at the school entrance.**

Thank you for all your support during the first 6 weeks of this term. We are really looking forward to seeing you all very soon. In the meantime, should you have any questions, suggestions or queries in relation to the reopening of the school, please feel free to contact me by email at [office@carnarossns.ie](mailto:office@carnarossns.ie) or by calling 087 9984612

Yours sincerely,

Dervilla Finnegan