

Kildare Place School – Re-opening Plan 2021



23rd August, 2021

Dear Parents,

We are really looking forward to welcoming our students back to school and will be doing all that we can to ensure that the return to school is a safe and enjoyable experience for the children.

We hope to re-open, and keep our school community safe again for 2021 / 2022 in line with current guidance and recommendations on Thursday, 26th August, '21.

Re-opening the school safely requires the co-operation of all members of our School Community – BoM, School Leadership, Staff, Parents and Pupils. We must all play our part in ensuring that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner which prevents the spread of COVID 19 and allows the vital work of teaching and learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible in Kildare Place School.

We have been working on our plan for the safe re-opening of the school for some weeks now and have published the following documents from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) on our school website:

1. COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e1141-covid-19-response-plan-for-the-safe-and-sustainable-operation-of-primary-and-special-schools/>

2. Video advice for parents and students at different levels

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

At <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/preventing-the-spread/keep-your-child-home/>

the DES Response Plan advises:

When to keep your child at home

Do not send your child to school or childcare if any of the following apply.

Your child has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- any other common symptoms of COVID-19 - a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath or an existing breathing condition that has recently become worse
- been in [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

- been living with someone who is unwell and may have COVID-19
- other uncommon symptoms of COVID-19, such as sore throat or headaches
- diarrhoea
- returned from another country in the last 14 days

It also gives information including:

- 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 may prevent the spread of the virus

We will also publish our COVID-19 Policy Statement on the school website. We hope that this document will now provide you with the information required, to play your part in safely re-opening the school.

Illness and Self-Isolation – As per DES guidance above KPS remind parents / guardians that...

Please read all the documents from the DES referred to above.

Whilst all children will be welcome back to school, where students or anyone in their household are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Should students display such symptoms in school, they will be isolated, and parents will be asked to collect them from the school promptly.

Children who have travelled from foreign countries that have recommended self-isolation periods – should not attend school at this time.

It is vital that all families and members of the school community respect the seriousness of the re-opening of the school, and our collective responsibility to protect each other and the wider community. Children will not be penalised for missing school for reasons of illness or self-isolation.

In general, In line with recent Department recommendations, it is imperative that:

- **Face masks should be worn by all ADULTS coming into the school playground.** If you have a medical reason not to do so, please contact Mr Packham directly regarding same.
Please inform anyone dropping or collecting your child of this routine.
- Adults do not come within 2m of each other
- Parents/minders do not try to have meetings with members of staff in the playground at drop-off and collection times – meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement. (This may have to be more restrictive depending on guidance - it is quite possible that the recommendation will be for remote meetings/telephonic communications.)
- All parents adhere to the drop-off and collection plans as outlined below

We are fortunate to have a large playground area to the front of the school and this can of course be used to stand in during the morning should parents have to enter through the gate. We will also have a one way system in operation at the gate to further ensure social distancing.

It is proposed to re-open in as close to normal a manner as we can, with some adjustments as below.

Access to School Grounds

All of us here in Kildare Place appreciate your support as we try to safely re-open Kildare Place School. **If at all possible we request you not to come onto the school grounds in the morning. Access to the school building itself is strictly limited to staff and pupils. For all other essential visits/meetings/appointments, prior consultation must be made with the office.**

Drop-off and Collection Routines

The BoM and the School Leadership Team have been working to ensure a safe return to school on **Thursday, 27th August**. We have now finalised our plans for drop-off and collection of the children every day. We would ask all parents to familiarise themselves with the following drop-off and collection routines for the safe delivery and collection of pupils from school. Those of you who were in KPS last year will find the routines very similar. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year. Working together, we hope to be able to progress the re-opening in as safe a manner as possible for all.

Drop Off

- We appreciate that dropping off the **Infant pupils** to the yard is essential. We recommend just one adult per family. Once the school doors are open, staff will be present to accompany pupils into the school building.
- For the older pupils a drop off by a single grown up at the school gate is desirable (there are of course some children in all classes who for a variety of reasons need to be accompanied into the school grounds and we ask that the whole school community to be mindful of this)
- To facilitate early drop off - the school gates will open (as previously) at **8.40 a.m.** There will be a ten minute period where pupils can wait in the playground within their class bubbles.
- Staff members will be available in the school playground each morning to help facilitate the safe movement of pupils and ensure that social distancing guidelines are being adhered to
- The school doors will open at **8.50 a.m.** and pupils will be asked to make their way directly to their class. Pupils are asked to wait for confirmation from the staff on duty prior to entering the school building.
- We would ask that where possible parents facilitate a steady/staggered stream of drop offs at the gate between **8.50 and 9.00 a.m., socially distancing as appropriate.**
- Formal teaching will begin in the classrooms at **9.10 a.m.** As is always the case, we recommend having all pupils in school by **9.00 a.m.** as it is an important time for them to have the chance to meet friends and settle into the day.

Collection

- Collection times remain 1.30 p.m. for Infant classes and 2.30 p.m. for all other classes. (Collection times are slightly different for the first two weeks for Junior Infants) Initially, there may be a slight delay in releasing classes so as to ensure social distancing. Staff will be available to help guide and support the release of pupils.
- During pupils' collection times we kindly ask parents to adhere to social distancing guidelines in the playground and not approach the school.

- Infant Classes will be released from doors at the top of the playground (as in the past) at 1.30 p.m.
- Senior Classes will be released on a rota basis – with some classes being asked to wait on their class line in the playground and wait for collection. This will ensure we don't have groups of pupils from separate classes congregating at the door areas. Once we see you, we will then release your child to your care!

Infection Control Measures in School

We have put in place a number of policies that aim to minimise spread of Covid-19 (and other infections) in the School.

Physical Distancing

- Procedures and routines within the school have been upgraded to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -

- ***Increased Separation.*** Classrooms, as last year, have been reconfigured to maximise 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 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom.
- ***Decreased Interaction.*** The potential for children from different bubbles to interact has been decreased. There will be marked routes for classes to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles will have specific playground areas during mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground. We will make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

Limiting Interactions Outside of Class Bubbles

- All pupils will be asked to go straight to their own classrooms (as usual) and remain there as much as possible – excluding class visits to playground/ hall etc.
- As far as is possible – classes are to minimise meeting each other in corridors/ stairwells. A one-way-system has been marked on the stairs to facilitate this
- As much as is possible, the school will make use of the two stairwells and not have classes passing through each other
- Unfortunately at this time, there is still not the possibility of having indoor whole school assemblies or activities where more than one class meets together. When appropriate, some larger group outdoor assemblies may take place.
- Any additional adult visitors to the school will only be permitted through the office and a log of visitor details will be kept for contact tracing purposes
- Face coverings must be worn by all adults entering the school.

Hand Hygiene and Toilet Facilities

- There will be hand sanitizing stations in all classrooms, and at all doors and stairwells
- Each class will have one designated toilet block. Other than in exceptional cases, students will be asked to go to the toilet one at a time

- All classes will have a routine of hand hygiene/ sanitisation– at an appropriate level. facilitated by the class teacher
- It is proposed that all pupils have a little pack with them in their schoolbags with a personal hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes and a facecloth to wipe/dry their own hands
- The W.H.O. has encouraged use of hand washing with soap and drying with hand dryers as an alternative to constant use of alcohol hand gel / sprays. We will be encouraging use of both in appropriate settings during the school day.
- The use of the hand dryer in the pupils’ toilets will be encouraged/ reinforced.
- Please do talk to your children about the importance of correct hand washing and drying.

Air Filtration

- Each classroom/support room in KPS has an air purifier which is useful as a tool to assist us in keeping the air clean.

Break Times

- The school playground is marked with eight specific class areas so that pupils can have access to the playground whilst remaining in their class bubble (i.e. not socialising with other classes). Optimum yard space has been provided for each bubble.
- At the end of break times, when the bell rings, all pupils will line up on their class lines, as in the past. These lines will be pointed out to all classes in due course.
- These new lines may also be used by staff to ensure at other times that classes remain isolated i.e. they may also be used at home time etc.

Surfaces and Space

- Surfaces will be wiped regularly to ensure as much safety as possible.
- All staff have removed as much unwanted/unnecessary furniture as possible. This is to facilitate the optimum space that we can in all classes.
- The staffroom will operate as normal, with an overflow space on the stage, to provide us with sufficient room to adhere to social distancing.

Face Coverings

- There is no obligation for pupils to wear face coverings and their correct use is difficult to monitor with small children. However, if you wish your child to wear a mask, please include it in your pack – more details at the bottom of this document.
- As recommended, all staff will wear face coverings at appropriate times and during activities where the 2m social distancing guideline is difficult to adhere to.

After School Activities and ‘Club’

- Due to current COVID 19 restrictions, Pamela and Vivienne are not in a position to run their After School Club at present. This will continue to be reviewed.
- Unfortunately, due to the current restrictions, KPS is not in a position to offer after school activities from the start of the school year. This will be reviewed again by the BoM and the staff promptly. All decisions will take cognisance of government guidelines and the health and safety for all parties concerned.

Cleaning

- An enhanced cleaning routine has been put in place in the school. Additional hours have been assigned to our cleaning company. Pupils may be encouraged to carry out some minor sanitising tasks, at an age appropriate level, as part of the new classroom “routine” – (trying to teach a few life skills and making it part of the new school life!)

What do parents need to do?:

In order to be ready for the return to school could we please ask for your help and support with the following:

- Make sure that you are adhering to the published guidelines in relation to foreign travel – **If you have been staying/holidaying in an effected area, your children must isolate in line with government recommendations.**
- Please talk to your child and assure them that their return to school will be positive. We can't wait to see them all again, and see the school back in action. Remind them that the teachers will all be talking to them all about the new routines etc. and that if they have any concerns the school staff will be there to help and support them.
- All the books and stationery for pupils is being ordered for you by the school. All your child needs is a schoolbag, lunchbox and pencil case with (personal/ not to be shared) stationery. Each teacher will send you out an email in the first week if there are any additional items that might be needed. There is no need to buy anything else just yet. Senior classes can have the usual supplies in their pencil cases!
- In order to help us adhere to the guidelines, and above all for the safety of pupils, we are asking that each child have a sealable bag (freezer bag) etc. labelled with their name that will contain the following items.

One small personal bottle of hand sanitiser	A face mask (if one is required)
A small face cloth that can be used to dry hands in the classroom	A small packet of anti-bacterial wipes

Having these additional items in a personal pack will ensure that pupils can be confident that they have a role to play in working with the school to help keep us all safe. Hand dryers are in place in all the bathrooms, however many school are now adopting the practice of a personal hand towel only used by your child and washed/ replaced as often as desired by parents at home.

We are satisfied that we have control measures in place to ensure that this will be a safe re-opening in Kildare Place School. We believe our routines and procedures should keep everyone safe in school and should prevent the spread of COVID 19. This “plan” is a working document and we are conscious that we may not get everything right the first time. We are aware that following the first few days in school, we may need to review and amend some of these proposed practices. As always we will appreciate your help and support should changes to the procedures need to be made. We will of course be constantly reviewing all the practices mentioned, in an effort to come up with the best, and most practical, solutions.

There may be some unforeseen challenges, but we will deal with these should they arise with our greatest efficiency.

As is always the case in Kildare Place, we would like to thank you sincerely for your co-operation and ongoing support in making preparations to date. We will need your help to ensure that we all do what

we can to keep everyone safe. We look forward to working with you as we assist the children adapt to the necessary changes as they come back to school to meet their friends again.

We are aware that our new pupils are beginning a school year at a continued challenging time and our plans aim to ensure that their arrival will be as stress free and as smooth a transition for them as possible. A full document specifically for our new Infants Classes will be issued to them prior to the school's re-opening.

As a staff, we look forward to welcoming all our pupils and parents/guardians back to school for the 2021/2022 school year on **Thursday next, 26th August**. Our main focus of the first few weeks is welcoming and settling our pupils into KPS, and ensuring that their transition to school is as smooth and happy as possible.



Ian Packham & Staff

On behalf of Kildare Place School Board of Management