



Banagher College

Coláiste na Sionna

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Principal: Mr P.Scales Deputy Principal: Ms L.Kinahan

August 19th 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope that you and your family are keeping well.

We at Banagher College are preparing for the safe return to school for students and staff in the coming weeks. In carrying out the preparations we are following the guidelines issued by the Department of Education & Skills in recent weeks. For your information all guidelines issued to schools are available on the following website: www.gov.ie/backtoschool

The school website bccns.ie and our twitter handle @BanagherCollege will be updated on a regular basis to keep you informed.

School reopening dates:

As a result of the new safety measures put in place, we will need to provide time for students to become familiar with our new setup. As a result, we have adjusted our phased return to school as follows:

Thursday August 27th	COVID 19 Induction for all staff
Friday August 28th	Staff Meeting
Monday August 31st	Staff Planning
	TY Covid 19 Induction Afternoon 1.30 - 3.30pm
Tuesday September 1st	1st Year Induction Day 1
Wednesday September 2nd	1st Year Induction Day 2.
Thursday September 3rd	6th Year & 3rd Year Covid 19 Induction and Classes <i>1st Year Normal School Day</i>
Friday September 4th	2nd & 5th Year Covid 19 Induction and Classes <i>1st, 3rd, 6th Year Normal School Day</i>
Monday September 7th	Staff Training Day/ Leaving Cert Results
Tuesday September 8th	All students in school

We have made a number of changes around the school in order to meet the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills. All changes are implemented to ensure the Health and Safety of students and staff while attending the school.

- The layout in classrooms has changed, students will sit at desks one metre apart.
- In the case of some classes we have reduced the number of students to provide one metre physical distancing.
- We will be operating a one-way system on corridors and stairs – both corridors and stairs will be marked with arrows.
- Toilet areas will be restricted to one or two students with clear signage on doors giving the maximum occupancy of the toilet area.
- Hand sanitisers will be in place at entrances, exits, in all classrooms and in the canteen.
- Cleaning materials will be available in each classroom for staff and student use.
- Posters reminding students of procedures are located throughout the school.
- Break and lunch will be staggered so that only three year groups are on break/lunch at any time.
- A second canteen has been set up to help alleviate group congestion and seats marked where students can sit.

Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID -19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, students, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school.

It is critical that staff, students, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

Please follow these guidelines:

Students that have symptoms **must not** attend school. You need to phone your doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;

Symptoms for Covid-19

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

Students **must not** attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19 and must follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.

- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.
- Students that develop symptoms at school must bring this to the attention of a teacher who will inform the principal (or deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly.
- Students and parents must know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school.
 - The person will be brought to the designated isolation room in the school by a member of staff.
 - If the person with the suspected case is a student, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
 - The student must wear a face covering or mask.
 - Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
 - Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
 - If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner 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, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect.

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 student confidentiality is essential at all times.

Contact details: It is very important that we have your **up to date contact details**.

- We need **mobile telephone numbers** for parents and also an alternative contact (family member or friend) if we are unable to contact parents.
- As communication is continuously moving to electronic means we also need **an email address** for parents. If you do not have an email address currently, I would ask you to create an email account. If you need support with this you can contact the school. If we do not have your correct contact details or alternative contact for a relative/friend, please contact the school and we will update the records.

Reminder to anyone attending school who has travelled abroad:

Government policy, which is based on 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' ("green"), **to restrict their movements for 14 days**, and this includes school staff, parents and children or other students 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.

Visitors to the school: The guidance from the Department of Education & Skills is that visitors to the school must be kept to a minimum. All visitors to the school must be by prior arrangement with the Principal. If you have any queries, please contact the school in the first instance by phone or email. Forgotten lunches, equipment etc should be dropped at the front door waiting area in a bag clearly labelled with the students name and class on it.

Books and Equipment: Students must have their own equipment including pens, copies, folders, calculators etc. It will not be possible for students to share items.

Uniform: Students must wear their school uniform as normal. Public Health advice does not mention that uniforms should be washed every day but we ask that good hygiene be maintained at all times.

Face Coverings: The latest guidance for post primary schools recommend that Face Coverings be worn by students and staff where Physical Distancing of 2m cannot be maintained. Students will have to wear a face covering in classrooms, on corridors and in the canteen (except while eating). When students are outdoors, they should physical distance by at least two metres. Further details on wearing face coverings is available at this link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

School Times:

To relieve congestion in the early weeks 1st year and TY's will finish school at **3.35pm** Monday to Thursday and Friday at **2.25pm**.

Students should enter and exit the school promptly daily and if **students cannot be collected on time** parents/guardians should inform the school.

The school lunch times will change slightly to accommodate social distancing.

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Years will have their lunch from 12.30 to 1.06
- TY, 5th and 6th Years will have their lunch from 1.06 to 1.40

Drop off point: We would ask **parents** (weather permitting) to drop and collect students at the **bus set down area** and avoid congestion at the main entrance of the school.

Canteen: The canteen will be open before school at morning break and at lunchtime. We have divided our canteen into 2 separate locations. The junior canteen will be based in the Shannon Suite and the senior students will use the main canteen area. As mentioned above only three year groups will be on breaks at any time. The food available will be similar to last year. Social distancing must be adhered to in these areas and the eating areas designated around the school.

Water Fountains: Water fountains will not be in operation in the school.

Leaving the School Premises: To limit social interaction with personal outside of our immediate school population and protect all within our wider community, no students will be permitted to leave the school grounds during break or lunchtime unless they are going to their home. It is strongly recommended that all **students remain on the premises** at lunch time to maintain social distancing and protect all in the school community.

Cleaning: Cleaning will take place in the school throughout the day with touch points such as door handles, handrails, etc. and toilet areas regularly cleaned. Students and staff will have to keep their own workspaces clean with cleaning products supplied. A thorough clean of the school will take place at the end of each school day.

Code of Behaviour: It is crucial that all students comply with the Health and Safety regulations in place to protect the school community. Failure to comply with Health and Safety regulations is a Major Offence.

Please ensure that your son/daughter is familiar with all procedures and is willing to comply with them. If a student does not cooperate with the Covid-19 guidelines, then they will be sent home and cannot return to school until a commitment is given that the student will abide by all Health & Safety regulations. The Board of Management will be informed of any serious or continued failure to abide by procedures.

1st Years: We look forward to welcoming our 1st year students. We understand that this has been a very difficult time for students and there may be some apprehension starting a new school. We will endeavour to make the transition for them as smooth as possible in the current circumstances. We are planning two induction days with 1st Year students on their own in the school to help them adjust to their new school and help deal with the transition from primary school.

Here are some useful links on the transition from primary to post primary school that you may find helpful:

- <https://www.sess.ie/resources/transition-primary-post-primary>
- <https://asiam.ie/education/transitioning-primary-secondary-school/>
- <https://www.npcpp.ie/information-for-parents/from-primary-to-secondary/>
- <https://www.schooldays.ie/articles/transition-from-primary-school-to-secondary-school>
- <https://www.folens.ie/sites/default/files/2020-01/folens-primary-to-pp-transition-booklet-final.pdf>

I hope the above helps in understanding the changes that will be in place when we return to school and if any further information becomes available it will be uploaded to the school website and our twitter account.

I look forward to welcoming your son/daughter back to school over the coming weeks.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

P Scales