



Maynooth Educate Together National School
Rail Park,
Celbridge Road,
Maynooth,
Co Kildare.
W23 P466

Maynooth Educate Together NS

Dear Parents,

I hope this finds you, and all our children and families, safe and well.

I write to you in advance of **re-opening Maynooth Educate Together NS on Thursday August 27th** next, after an unprecedented period of closure. We look forward to seeing all of our pupils settle back to school. At the outset, I offer huge tribute to you, our students and parents who worked so well at home during that time!

I wish to give a general overview of plans going forward and further communications will issue in the coming days giving more details, if necessary. Obviously, we will be waiting for any further announcements from the Government and will revert if there are any changes which impact on schools.

Key messages

Community:

We are in this together.

It is only with sharing and cooperation of all of us that we will optimise the safety of our children, staff and community. As a school team, we take our responsibility very seriously and have been working to upgrade the school environment, develop our plans and routines, all to ensure that we are ready for opening next week. I know that we will all play our part!

Wellbeing:

The wellbeing of all our children is paramount.

Our children are resilient and will continue to progress on their return to school. Our aims is that everyone will feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. School will be a little different this year, especially at the beginning. Children will become familiar with our new routines and practices very quickly. Please explain to your child that things will be different, but try not to let them sense that you are overly worried.

This may be a time of anxiety for some of our children- we ask that you notify us of any particular concerns you have in this regard.

Time is central:

Please co-operate with us.

It will take time to get used to new routines and we will need to monitor and review practices on an ongoing basis. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year.

Cleanliness and Awareness:

A deep clean has been carried out on the school building and new procedures for ongoing cleaning are in place. We have employed the services of a cleaning company who will clean the school each afternoon and Martin, our caretaker/cleaner will be on site throughout the school day to do spot cleaning and sanitising. Sanitisers, soap dispensers and paper towels are all available.

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing and coughing. Information posters will be posted around the school to reinforce these messages.

Parents, we ask for your supporting in emphasising safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Resources will be provided for children individually, where possible, or shared with their 'Pod'. Resources that are shared between pods will be cleaned between uses.

Books, toys, and resources will be cleaned regularly or quarantined before being reused.

Physical distancing what will it look like?

We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way. We are advised to increase separation and decrease interaction. Children from Junior Infants to 2nd class are not expected to keep a distance.

Increasing Separation will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing (following classroom layouts advised in Department documentation). Each class will be known as a class Bubble, and each class bubble will be divided into Pods. Children in a pod will sit, work and play together. They will remain in the same pod for a number of weeks.

Decreasing Interaction will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms and staggered breaks will be arranged. Children will have designated areas to play in the yard.

Staff will try to maintain physical distance from children when they can, and will wear face coverings and other PPE when needed.

Lead Worker Representative Team

In accordance with the schools re-opening protocols, we have appointed a Lead Worker Representative Team of Elaine, Aimee and Joan. The LWR team will work in collaboration with the Board of Management to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, and to monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around Covid-19 in the workplace.

Arrivals and Dismissals

METNS will have staggered drop-offs and collection times, assign access points and entrances to specific classes, put one-way systems in place to reduce congestion.

All staff, parents and children are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school.

Car drop-offs: There will be **NO PARKING** allowed in front of the school. The first lane in front of the school will be closed to traffic to allow for more space for arrival, dismissal, social distancing and for the safety of the children.

The outer two lanes will be for **drop off & pick up only**. Please do not arrive before your drop off/collection slot.

There will be 3 drop off times and 3 collection times:

We have divided the school community by family.

(If a double barreled surname is used, please use the name that appears first eg Smyth-Fagan, alphabetically use "S"). The earlier collection times in the table below refers to children in the infant classes.

Surname	Drop Off Term 1	Collection Term 1
A-F	8.30am	12.50pm/1.50pm
G-N	8.40am	1pm/2pm
O-Z	8.50am	1.10pm/2.10pm

Walkers/ cyclists/ scooters: Entry/Exit from the school for walkers, bikes & scooters will be the new pedestrian entrance. It will be divided and sign posted for entry & exit.

Entry to school building

- Children will be dropped off to the front of the school and make their way directly to their classrooms. Supervision will be provided in this area. Teachers will be in their classroom to receive children.

- Senior Classes (2nd – 6th) will enter the school via the exit door to the yellow staircase. All children walk on the left and socially distance.
- Junior classes (Junior Infants – 1st) will enter the via the main building. The hall will be supervised to guide children safely to their classrooms.
- Children will wash and sanitise their hands, on arrival to the classroom in the morning.

Break Times:

- There will be 2 x 20 min breaks (x 2 940-10/1010-1030 & 1130-1150/12-1220. Children will play within their class bubble only. The yards will be divided in two to facilitate class bubbles. Teachers will supervise between the bubbles to encourage children to play in their designated space. Children will wash their hands on their return to the classroom.
- Children need to wear layers. Classroom windows will be open for air circulation. Having layers makes it easy for children to regulate their body temperature.
- Invest in a good rain coat/jacket. The children will be going to the yard, even on wet days!

Dismissal:

Dismissal from the classrooms will take place in a controlled manner to avoid congestion as follows;

Exit from the upstairs will be:

- via the yellow staircase for 2nd & 5th. These classes will exit the building from the yellow staircase door.
- Via the orange staircase for 6th and via the green staircase for 3rd & 4th. These classes will exit via the main school door.

Children will socially distance where possible.

Hand Hygiene

Children will perform hand hygiene regularly during the school day:

- On arrival at school
- Before eating or drinking
- After using the toilet · Exit from the upstairs will be via the yellow staircase for 2nd & 5th. Via the orange staircase for 6th and via the green staircase for 3rd & 4th. Children will socially distance where possible.
- After a cough or sneeze
- After playing outdoors

- When hands are physically dirty.

Hand sanitising dispensers are located in each classroom and on corridors.

Children may bring their own sanitisers in their school bags, but this is not necessary. If brought to school, the sanitiser must not be shared.

Schoolbags and Lunches

The government has not given any guidelines on these items, but a common sense approach should be followed.

- Children should not have any unnecessary items such as toys in their schoolbags.
 - Choose lunchboxes, bottles and pencil cases that are easy to clean, as they need to be cleaned daily.
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Communication with school

Every effort will be made to minimise the number of visitors to enter the school building.

- Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building unless by appointment. Appointments may be made to visit the school for essential purposes.
 - Parents will not enter the school without a face covering. If it is an emergency, parents will enter the school with a face covering and report to Hilary in the office.
 - A contact tracing log will need to be filled out by each visitor.
 - You may communicate with your child's teacher in the traditional way, such as the homework diary, phone calls etc. Each class teacher will communicate with parents of their class to outline their preferred communication mode.
 - Our school secretary, Hilary should be given (by parents/guardians) updated contact numbers for Parents/Guardians & Emergency contact numbers if Parents can't be contacted.
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Suspected cases of Covid-19

Symptoms of Covid-19

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

Children should **not attend** school if they are unwell, or if any members of their household are unwell with symptoms of Covid-19.

If any pupil is/ becomes unwell at school, he/she will be brought to the isolation room and given a mask to wear. Parents will be contacted to collect their child immediately.

The HSE will inform any parents of children who come into close contact with a diagnosed case

Children's temperatures should be taken each morning before their arrival to school. Children's temperatures may be taken in school or children may be moved to an isolation area (with a known member of staff) if they are displaying one or more symptoms of Covid 19.

Green list and returning from abroad

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

For updated information please see the Government's 'Travelling to Ireland from a location that is on the COVID-19 Green List website.

Junior Infants

There are separate arrangements for the Junior Infants & their parents for the first few days/weeks of school and a separate letter will be sent.

Classroom Routines / Schoolbags / Books

Each class teacher will decide the best way to run and keep their class bubble safe. Each teacher will communicate in the coming days the procedures relating to books, homework and the day to day running of their class.

Homework will not be assigned for the first week or two to allow for a settling period.

Further Information

The following websites provide further information on COVID-19 and on government advice and recommendations regarding the re-opening of schools should you wish to view: -

- <https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/>
- <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool/>.

Our school will provide you with the any additional information required by you to play your part in safely re-opening the school. We are really looking forward to welcoming our children back and will be doing all that we can to ensure that they return to the happy school that we know and love.

Finally, our aim remains to re-open the school in a safe manner, ensuring our children feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends. I look forward to meeting everyone again soon and to working together to keep all in our community safe.

Best wishes and kind regards

Marie Hand

Principal