



Memo No. 2 to Parents 17th September 2020

Dear Parents,

Now into Week 3 of the Return to School, it seems that things are nice and settled and, as issues arise, we are dealing with them and moving forward, so far so good!

It is great to see so many pupils walking, cycling and 'scootering' to school. Well done on this admirable effort.

Please find attached below:

- **A Garment Care Letter for Parents** from Mick Murphy's Uniform Supplier
- A Document for Parents: **Primary Children Parent Advice re Covid Symptoms** (HSE)

Other items of note:

1. Additional Support for Pupils:

We will continue to operate a Support System for those pupils who need extra support academically, socially and emotionally as we have always done. However, we need to take account this year of the need to minimise the number of contacts in any one class for both pupils and staff. For the most part, Support Teachers will work this year at class level only rather than with pupils throughout the school. They will provide additional support to individuals at this level, groups within the level and or in-class support as deemed appropriate. This will help reduce the number of contacts in each class.

2. The use of Seesaw Online Platform for Teaching and Learning Continued:

We have started the process of setting up each class with the online platform, **Seesaw**. Everyone will hopefully be familiar with Seesaw after our remote learning last year. For those new to Scoil Barra, we will be sending out more information about the platform, along with a consent form, in the coming days.

We hope over the next term that people will familiarise themselves again with Seesaw by engaging on a minimal level under the direction of their Class Teacher. To use Seesaw you will log into (<http://seesaw.me>) using a unique username and password for your child. This username and password will be provided by the child's class teacher in the coming weeks.

3. Enrolment for the School Year 2021-2022:

Under new Legislation, enrolment for places for Junior Infants for the following school year opens for all schools on the 1st October of the preceding year with a period of not less than three weeks whereby the school accepts applications. The closing date for enrolment applications will be issued by each school individually. As all schools have historical applications which were submitted prior to the new legislation, these applications will remain valid and will not have to be resubmitted to comply with new legislation. However, no new application, from here on in, will be accepted for Junior Infants other than for the following year and only during the set application period as outlined by each school. Please note that the order that applications arrive into a school has no

bearing on the allocation of places. Allocation of places are based strictly on the criteria set out in the Enrolment Policy.

As part of the new legislation, each school will post an **Annual Admissions Notice** on their website before the 1st October each year giving full details of Enrolment Procedures and all previous relevant data. This notice will also be emailed to all parents. Please access this Notice which will be posted shortly if you have a child you hope to enrol for the next school year, 2021 – 2022. On the **1st October 2020**, all schools will post the final draft of their **New Admissions Policy** which will include all mandated changes issued by the new legislation.

4. **First Holy Communion:**

We have received our date from Fr. George for the sacrament of First Holy Communion for the pupils who did not receive it last May: **17th October 2020**. There will be two ceremonies to cater for Scoil Barra's pupils, one for each class, at **11 a.m. and 1 p.m.** The church will be aired and fully sanitised in the intervening time. We are delighted that the children will finally receive this important sacrament in their spiritual lives.

As with all aspects of life, the Covid-19 virus is placing many restrictions on the ceremony in order to maintain safety and health as a main priority. These restrictions are not of the school's making, they are directives issued from the HSE to our parish priest and to the priests of all parishes in the country. In the Church of Christ our Light, Fr. George has been directed that **90 people** is the maximum he can have in the church. Therefore, each pupil will have two family members with them on the day. This is not what we are traditionally used to, however, it will not impinge in any way on the religious significance of the sacrament which is what First Holy Communion is essentially about. We are looking into the possibility of **'live streaming'** the ceremony so that other family members can witness (virtually) the children receiving the sacrament. If any parents or friends have expertise, experience or contacts regarding the operation of 'live streaming', please let me know, you may be able to help in this regard.

5. **School Rules:**

While our main priority for the past few weeks has been to get ourselves and the children back to school safely and without anxiety, we are also aware that we all need the steadiness and regularity of 'Normality' as much as possible. To this end, it is important that we keep the regularity of school rules which have always helped to create an environment of consistency and security for the pupils especially.

Punctuality, school uniform (with its flexibility this year), and general school rules should continue to be observed as always. I might just mention one particular trend which is emerging, mainly among more senior pupils (but some more junior pupils also!) which needs to be addressed:

Dyed hair, false nails, fake tan and make up are strictly prohibited in school. We want the 5/6 hours that children are in school to be a time when they do not have to be concerned with appearances, keeping up with the latest trends, peer pressure and all that goes with social pressure. Their school day should be a welcome respite from all of that, if only for a few hours Monday to Friday.

Meanwhile, the co-operation and good will of all our parents and pupils in the past few weeks have been heart-warming and admirable.....*Míle Buíochas do gach duine* (a thousand-fold gratitude to one and all).

Comhghairdeas (Congratulations) also to **Ms. Farrell** who sneaked in a wedding just before we returned to school and married **Rob Foulkes**! We wish them both many years of happiness together.

Karen O'Sullivan (Principal)