



Hansfield

Educate Together National School
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Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I hope that this communication finds you all safe, busy and in good spirits.

The past 6 months have been extraordinary and we're all looking forward to returning to a daily structure that facilitates parents going to work and the children learning together once more.

Our first day back will be next Thursday 27th August when we can begin the 20/21 school year. While we are returning to the building that we are all familiar with, we are not returning to do the same thing in the way that we were accustomed to.

Our frame of mind should be that we are still in "lockdown" but a concession has been made to manage the children's learning in the building it used to take place in, in a way that minimises the risk of spreading the virus to many people at once ie small units of pupils - **Pods** (4 children), **Bubbles** (26 children) and **Groups** (200 children). The manner in which we return to children learning together and how we proceed during a typical school day will be very different to what we were familiar with.

We are all part of the Hansfield Team - pupils, parents, SNA's, teachers, secretaries and cleaners. When we each play our individual part, the team will last the full year and in the event of an outbreak of the C-19 virus, the smallest possible number of players on our team will be affected.

The key to achieving this is **AWARENESS** and **CONSIDERATION**. We all have to make sure that we have the facts and be aware of how following the rules will "keep our team playing" until next June.

Assume that you have the virus and take every precaution not to pass it on and also assume that everyone else you meet has the virus and you need to protect yourself. Dramatic I know, but if we think like this, our behaviour will look after everyone on the Hansfield Team.

The time has passed to expect day-by-day guidance from the experts - They have told us for months now how we should behave. We all know what to do and we simply have to take personal responsibility to consider others while at the same time, protect ourselves. The younger children will need constant reminding about what to do and what not to do so parents need to have a few **age-appropriate** catch phrases ready to serve as reminders. Try to use the same phrases as the school staff use and the children will realise that the reminders are for every location, not just for school or home separately. No need for scare-mongering, just a gentle but firm approach; you know your children best and therefore you know the best approach to take.

An easy catch phrase to make sure that we are social distancing for example might be "**Stretch out one arm, then one more step away**". Joe is busy composing a few more for us and we will send you his examples in Document 2 tomorrow.

Your co-operation with the following procedures will keep us all safe.

“Drop Off” and “Pick up” Procedures

Children should be dropped off a few minutes before their designated time.

Every Bubble has been assigned a unique location to line up before school, during playground time and at home time.

A location map and classroom location diagram will be sent in Document 2, tomorrow.

The children will wait in their line (red spots marked 2M apart) from where their teacher will lead them to their classroom.

Parents may stay with their child ON THEIR RED SPOT in the line until the teacher arrives.

On arrival to the classroom, the children will go straight to their chairs in their Pod and hang their coats and schoolbags on the back of the chair.

Each child will have a small plastic labelled container for their books etc which will be stored under their chair throughout the day.

Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of C-19 **OR** who have served the required quarantine time of 14 days, where advised, should drop and collect children.

The responsibility rests with parents to ensure that same condition applies to any other adults that parents nominate on the “purple sheet” which you will be asked to fill out during the first few days.

Parents and pupils who assemble during their 20 minute window will not have access to the school building and will have to physically distance using the red spots while waiting.

A good Hansfield team player won't be congregating in a group, chatting.

All parents/Guardians dropping and collecting children must wear face covering while on school grounds.

Socially distant “Parent Waiting Spots” have been placed on the ground also.

As you were informed last week, parents will not be permitted to be anywhere inside the school building.

Junior infants will be working an ever-increasing timetable (as Junior Infants have always done) for the first 3 weeks. This timetable will be in Document 2 being sent tomorrow.

Though it will not affect parents, we will be operating a “lanes” system in the corridors and stairwells - keep to the left (in the same way that we drive our cars on the left side of the road)

Our usual ‘**Stop, Drop and Go**’ system will be in operation for older children.

Extra staff will be located at critical points on the campus to supervise/direct children to their line locations until they become familiar with the routine.

If parents prefer to accompany their child(ren) to their line, you are very welcome to do so but please park in the double basketball court and walk, yes WALK, to the line with your child - The gates in Réalt Áras will be open for you to facilitate this.

The 4 “Set Down” zones at the front of the building are only for parents who choose to “Stop, Drop and Go”.

Though everyone would like to, it is impossible for every parent to stop in the space directly outside the front door. If that set down zone is full, please take the disappointment bravely and move on to the following zone. A good “Team Hansfield” driver will do their best to keep the traffic flowing smoothly!

All areas of the school yard will be manned by school personnel in high-vis jackets who will remind children to keep their distance and to proceed to a spot in their line.

Children will only leave through their designated exit point at “Pick Up” time and will be dismissed one-by-one by their teacher.

Children from 1st to 6th classes are encouraged to walk, cycle or “scoot” to school.

That **rocedures whilst in School**

Each class is now referred to as a ‘bubble’ and each bubble is sub-divided into several ‘pods’ that are separated from each other by as much space as the classroom layout dictates, but at least 1M.

Children remain in their Pods/Bubble throughout the school day. Bubble members only mix with children in their own Bubble from the time they arrive to school in the morning until they are collected/go home at the end of the school day.

In order to prevent bubbles mixing, (and increasing risk of spread) playground times will be staggered in 20 minute intervals and supervision will be provided by the Bubble’s own teacher.

“Rainy Days” arrangements remain as before.

Pod members will be rotated at each teacher’s discretion. Changes will only be made at the beginning of the day ie never during the day.

The school yards have already been subdivided into zones, one for each bubble.

Parents are encouraged to provide their child with weather appropriate clothing each day.

We will make every effort to bring Bubbles to the playground, regardless of weather, so children should have rain jackets, hats etc.

Additionally, every classroom door and window will be kept ajar to ensure the maximum air change per hour and minimise touching communal surfaces - pupils should wear an extra T-shirt/vest to accommodate this strategy.

Even though children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class (inc.) are not required to social distance, (as per guidelines), they will nevertheless be kept separate from all other Bubbles during the school day.

As always, containers, fruit peel and uneaten lunches will be taken home by the children in their lunchboxes daily.

Children are also asked to bring **2 small bottles of water** to school every day as they will not be permitted to fill water bottles from the sinks in the classrooms, which they would have usually done.

There will be no physical whole-school assemblies or activities. Assemblies may be facilitated remotely once everyone has settled back and the routine has been embedded.

Our public address system will only be used to disseminate whole-school or individual class messages. The timetabled “Bing-Bong” will be deleted.

The children’s pencils, pens, crayons etc will be labelled and left in each child’s plastic box at the end of every school day in a labelled A5 plastic pouch.

Parents should make sure that their children have a “Home Set” of these items for any home-based activities the teacher may assign or the children may wish to undertake themselves.

Generally though, written homework will not be assigned during term 1 at least.

We are currently investigating the possibility of an on-line graded reading scheme to ensure that this essential skill is practiced daily.

Please ensure that every item sent to school (books, lunchboxes, drinks bottles, uniforms etc) is labelled.

As always, if parents are buying lunchboxes/schoolbags/coats/shoes etc for the new school year, please ensure insofar as possible, that your child can open/close these independently.

Children are not obliged but are permitted to wear masks. As with the sanitising liquid, children have to be taught at home how to use masks properly and when/how to dispose of them.

A sanitising station has been installed in each classroom including pedal bins for safe disposal of used tissues. These bins will be emptied on a daily basis.

Staff will maintain a regular cleaning routine of all resources and materials that will be used by different Pods in each Bubble.

Where necessary, items of school equipment will be isolated for 72 hours prior to being used by a different Pod/Bubble.

Children should not bring toys or other personal items to school.

Because the cleaning regime, meticulously carried out by the 4 fantastic cleaners in our school (Aleks, Jean, Janice and Alan) is already at such a high level, only minor amendments have had to be made to bring the regime up to C-19 standards. The cleaners will sign off on their work in each classroom/corridor and stairwell on a daily basis.

Hand sanitizers have been located at each entrance/exit and also in each classroom.

Teachers will have their own personally labelled “mini clip on” sanitiser and parents of children from 3rd - 6th class are encouraged to provide their child with one of these also. Younger children may not understand the function of the sanitiser and also may be tempted, out of curiosity, to taste it!

Hygiene supplies (soap, toilet paper, paper towels and sanitizer) have all been accommodated in dispensers and will be, as always, replenished as required.

Every user of our building will clean their hands at the following times.

- ✓ On arrival in school
- ✓ Before eating or drinking
- ✓ After using the toilet
- ✓ After playing/ being outdoors
- ✓ After coughing or sneezing
- ✓ When hands are physically dirty (they will be washed with soap first)

Frequently touched areas in classrooms (taps, door-handles, toilets etc) will be cleaned twice daily during school hours and once afterwards by our four on-site cleaners.

Cleaning rotas have been put in place and will be signed after each clean and checked regularly by management.

Cleaners will have participated in the recommended, relevant training modules prior to 27/08.

Illnesses and Suspected Cases of C-19

Because a relatively large group of staff and pupils (685) use the Hansfield ETNS building daily, our Board of Mangement have agreed on a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy in relation to illnesses and suspected cases of C-19.

Staff or pupils must not attend school if they are unwell. Symptoms such as a fever, cough (dry or otherwise), shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, loss or change to sense of taste or smell, may indicate C-19.

Other symptoms such as unusual fatigue, sore throat, aches and pains, chills, runny/stuffy nose, sneezing, vomiting and diarrhoea may also indicate that a child/staff member is developing an illness.

It is recommended that your child does not attend school with any of the above symptoms. Parents will be asked to take children home if found to be symptomatic while in school. Please act responsibility in this regard and make the necessary work and childcare arrangements in order to eliminate the possible risk of infection in the school.

A child/staff member may only return to school/work a minimum of 48 hours after symptoms have subsided and on receipt of a doctor's note or on presentation of a negative C-19 swab.

Staff/children who have chronic illnesses or conditions with some of these symptoms must produce a doctor's letter to this effect and must notify us immediately of any changes to their baseline condition.

A dedicated **Isolation Area** (beside the rear entrance door, see map) has been designated on the ground floor of our school to safely and comfortably isolate pupils or staff members who are displaying symptoms or who have become unwell during the school day.

If a pupil(s) displays symptoms of C-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

The pupil will be accompanied to the Isolation Area by either Lisa or Fergal.

The Isolation Room has been laid out to ensure a distance of 2 meters is maintained. The room is equipped with easily wiped chairs, disposable masks, gloves, tissues, a non-touch thermometer and the room is adequately ventilated. The staff member and pupil will each be required to wear a face mask and gloves while in the Isolation room.

Parents will be contacted immediately by telephone - Please ensure that the school has 3 current contact numbers to assist in this regard.

The child and staff member will avoid touching people, surfaces and objects while waiting for the child's parents to arrive.

If the child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for transportation home by a family member, as soon as possible. The child can be collected from the Isolation Area and their parent will not need to go near the classroom or reception area.

Appropriate cleaning and disinfecting of the area will be carried out in a timely manner and in line with recommended procedures.

Public transport, of any kind, should not be used to travel home.

If the individual is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform the operator that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The Principal will inform the HSE in line with protocol and be directed what to do.

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 C-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed.

Staff and pupil confidentiality will be respected at all times.

It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes it known to their class teacher or Principal/Deputy Principal in the case of a staff member, as soon as possible.

Personal Protective Equipment

- All staff members of Hansfield ETNS will be provided with the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (masks, visors, aprons, gloves etc) for use in all areas where they cannot keep a 2m distance and for use in their classrooms, as they see fit.

The teachers will explain this to the children and will show them what they look like with and without face covering. It would be great if parents would also make their child(ren) aware that their teacher will show them what they look like with/without face covering. As this is already mandatory in shops etc, the children should already be familiar with people wearing face coverings.

Additional Control Measures

- Parents are asked to check their child's temperature prior to sending them to school each day.
- All staff will complete a "Return to Work" questionnaire and complete an on-line "Return to Work Module".

- Parents and guardians are also asked to complete a **Return to School Form** for each child prior to sending your child back to school. This will be sent to you via Aladdin Connect a few days prior to opening. Please pay special attention to the Self-Declaration Section, whereby you are required to notify the school immediately of any changes in your child's condition.
- If your family has been on holiday and has not completed the mandatory 14 days self-quarantine afterwards, your child will not be permitted to come to school. You may be required to produce flight details, if asked.
- Uniforms: Children's uniforms must be clean and washed regularly (preferably on a daily basis) as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve, as per coughing protocols. Class teachers will inform you about PE Days.
- All parent/teacher meetings will take place by pre-arranged appointment only and preferably, by phone or via a Zoom call. **Dedicated teacher e-mail addresses (that can be used up to 4pm weekdays) will be forwarded to you for ease of communication.**
- if parents need to collect your child early in an emergency situation, please contact the school via phone and arrangements will be made for a handover of your child, in line with protocol.
- Parents will not be able to drop lunches etc to school and access to the school building will be in emergency situations only. Please check that your child has his/her lunch/water bottle etc prior to leaving home.
- Please ensure your child is aware of and is using good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices. Teachers will reinforce an awareness of these practices in class.

Contact logs will be in place in classrooms and at Reception, in line with HSE protocols. External personnel granted access to the school must make a prior appointment with the principal and sanitize on entry and egress. They will also be requested to answer a set of questions pertaining to their health/movements prior to being given access to our building.

If your child has been deemed by a medical professional to be in a high risk category, please inform the school and send us the medical recommendation.

Once we have been given a medical recommendation, we can then set up support for your child's learning, remotely.

Our Support Team will be deployed within the school so that they are assigned to only one Bubble on any given day. This is to eliminate the risk associated with "crossing Bubbles".

As soon as the school is informed that a class teacher will be absent due to illness, a substitute teacher will be sought immediately to cover the class. If a substitute teacher cannot be engaged, the Support Teacher for the Bubble will be asked to cover.

Bubble members will not be split among other Bubbles if their teacher is absent, as has been the practice pre C-19.

The importance of every member of our Hansfield Team playing their individual part cannot be over-emphasised. The detailed measures that we have put in place may seem extraordinarily dictatorial and extreme but it's what we have to do (and continue to do) to keep everyone safe.

Please remember why our school exists and how important it is to keep the children learning together safely, happily and busily for as long as possible. We don't want our team to score any "own goals" and if we can all demonstrate **AWARENESS** of our behaviour and **CONSIDERATION** for our team, we'll be the best team in the land!!

Further details if necessary, will be communicated to you as we approach next Thursday 27th. It will be so **FANTASTIC** to see everyone back in school after such a long time apart.

A special welcome our new Junior Infants who will have their first day in "Big School" next Thursday. We hope that their mams and dads bring lots of tissues with them to soak the tears of pride as they watch their children pay absolutely no attention to their tears because they'll be too busy building the biggest castle in the world and interacting effortlessly with their classmates!! Our wish for them is to make lots of new "Bubble Friends" and discover the joy of feeling safe, happy and busy while learning together in Hansfield ETNS.

Final word goes to our 2019/20 6th Class pupils who will be starting in secondary school in September. They left us without a proper "goodbye" but we hope to arrange a gathering for them as soon as we are given permission to do so.

We wish them the very best of luck from everyone in Hansfield ETNS as they begin the exciting next step of their learning adventure. I'm sure that they will do us all proud as they begin all over again as the little fish in a big pond 😊

Go nÉirí libh I gConaí

Fergal