



# St. Thomas' Senior National School

## *Information for Parents on Return-to-School Procedural Changes*

Welcome back to all our pupils and a special welcome to pupils new to our school this year. We are delighted to be back and can assure you that we have put in place all the measures to make sure your child is safe in our care. We appreciate your support as we return to school. You will need to be patient with us as we put our new procedures and routines in place. They will be constantly reviewed and we may need to change them. We may need to change them if necessary. We are totally dependent on your co-operation for our plan to work. Reminder of the staggered return to school.

Class	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5 <sup>th</sup>	10.00-12.00	8.50-2.30	8.50-2.30	8.50-2.30	8.50-2.30
5 <sup>th</sup>		10.00-12.00	9.00-2.40	9.00-2.40	9.00-2.40
4 <sup>th</sup>			10.00-12.00	8.50-2.30	8.50-2.30
3 <sup>rd</sup>				10.00-12.00	9.00-2.40

- Contact Details:** Please ensure that we have the most up to date phone number at which you can be contacted. If you have not provided an e mail address you can do so by contacting Mairead in the office at 4526555 or by e mail [info@stthomas.ie](mailto:info@stthomas.ie)
- Hand Hygiene:** The importance of hand hygiene and cough etiquette will continue to be a major focus of every day. Children will practice regular hand hygiene throughout the day. Sanitisers are available on entry to the school and in each class room. Sanitisers only work on clean hands so it is important that children come to school with clean hands. There is no need for children to bring their own sanitiser to school.
- Cleaning:** The school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once every day after school. The cleaners will do doing extra hours every day. There is an extra 6 hours of cleaning every day. Commonly touched areas will also be cleaned during the school day.
- School Day:** The school day will be from 8.50a.m. - 2.30pm for children in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class and from 9.00a.m.-2.40p.m for children in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and Ms Seagrave's and Ms O Reilly's classes.
- Class Bubbles/Pods:** Classrooms have been changed to comply with 'social-distancing' guidelines. Children and staff will work in Class Bubbles. Children will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible. The aim is that children should mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day as far as possible. Children should not be out of the classroom unless with staff member.
- Breaks:** Break times will be staggered with 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class on yard at the same time and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes on yard at a different time. Children will play with children from their own class or bubble be

on the yard and will have to stay away from other bubbles at break times and when lining up. There will be 2 x 20 minute breaks. There will be two breaks of 20 minutes each. All children will wear a coloured bib to wear on yard. This will make it easier to ensure they are in the correct bubble. Children will store their bib in their box when not in use.

7. **Arrival:** It is very important that children should not arrive on the school grounds before their starting time. They will line up on yard on arrival at their designated place and will be collected by their teachers. Staff members will be on yard to help out. Please be assured that there will be plenty of staff on the school grounds in the mornings to help children get to their classrooms and become familiar with the new procedures. On wet days pupils will go straight into their classroom at the correct time.
8. **Parents on School Grounds:** We ask that you do not enter the school grounds unless absolutely essential and if you do that you keep 2 m apart from others. We need to keep the numbers of people on the yard as low as possible. Please do not try to approach any member of staff in the yard as meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement. When the school day is over the following arrangements will apply
9. **Home Time: Children from 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class will begin to go home at 2.30p.m.**
  - a. **Pupils from 6<sup>th</sup> class will exit through the small gate at the front of the school beside the school garden.**
  - b. **Pupils from 4<sup>th</sup> class will exit through the back gate near the church at Kiltalown**
10. **Children from 3<sup>rd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> class will begin to go home at 2.40p.m.**
  - a. **Pupils from 5<sup>th</sup> class will exit through the small gate at the front of the school beside the school garden.**
  - b. **Pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> class will exit through the back gate near the church at Kiltalown**

**Pupils should meet their parents outside the school gates where possible. The class teacher will walk their class to the gate and staff positioned at designated points throughout the grounds will also be helping out. Older pupils are not permitted to wait for younger siblings on the school grounds or collect them from the Junior School.**

11. **Visitors to the school:** Visitors to the school must have an appointment and visitors will be kept to a minimum. Visitors to the school must wear a face mask before they enter the building. Only one person should be in the lobby area at any time. Visitors can only enter the school building if they have an appointment. All visitors will need to sign the Contact Tracing Log which will be used to support HSE Contact tracing.
12. **Face coverings:** Staff will wear coverings (mask/visor) where a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. Staff will be provided with PPE. Children are not required to wear face masks (unless in the COVID room).
13. **Support Teachers / Special Needs Assistants:** While staff members (particularly support teachers and SNAs) can move between classes, this will be minimised as much as possible. Support will be provided though a mix of in-class support and withdrawal. Where a support teacher is working in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another. When children are withdrawn for support, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group and the teacher where possible. Support teacher will wipe tables and chairs in support

rooms using wipes/disinfectant in between different pupils or small groups attending. If staff are moving between classes they will observe agreed sanitising routines.

- 14. Shop:** There will be no school shop in the mornings.
- 15. Books etc:** Children will be given books and copies that they need and will keep them in a box at their desk. They should have their own pencils etc and should not share any of their belongings with others. They will have a box to keep them in. If educational resources/ books must be shared within the pod, covers must be wiped after use. Library books must remain in school. Children do not need to bring school bags into school as they will not be getting homework for the moment. If they bring in a pencil case it will remain in school.
- 16. Book Rental:** Cost for the year is €25 which will cover all the children need for school. All pupils will be given an envelope into which you can put the payment. The envelope can then be given to the class teacher.
- 17. Teacher/SNA absences:** We will do our very best to get a sub to cover absences. Classes will not be split if a teacher is absent.
- 18. Uniform:** Children can wear either track suit or school uniform. There is no guidance to say that uniforms should be washed every day.
- 19. Homework:** Written homework will not be given for the first month and will be reviewed after this time. Children will not need to bring a school bag to school.
- 20. HSCL:** We are very lucky that Lisa Rohan is our Home School Liaison Community Co-ordinator again and will be linking in with you this year. She can be contacted at 083 009 2792
- 21. Contacting the school:** You can contact the teacher by sending in a note, ringing the office at 4526555 or Lisa at 0830092792
- 22. Collection of Children during the School Day:** If a child needs to be collected during school time the parent/guardian should let Mairead the school secretary know beforehand by ringing 4526555. When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom buzzer at the front door of the school to alert the secretary. The child will be brought from their class to the parent/guardian by a member of staff. Visitors/parents entering the school building must wear a face mask. The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out at the lobby. No adult should enter the school building, unless by prior appointment or to collect their child.
- 23. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19** Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following steps will be taken
  - a. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
  - b. The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff.
  - c. The staff member will wear PPE and remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.
  - d. The child may also be isolated in the classroom at a distance of 2m. A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms.

- e. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- f. An assessment will be made by the a member of Senior Management as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- g. The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home and will assist them by calling their GP.
- h. The child presenting with symptoms should be given a disposable tissue, advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- i. If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- j. If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- k. Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- l. The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process.
- m. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made.
- n. The instructions of the HSE will at all times be followed.

**24. When to keep your child at home**– Do not send your child to school if your child is feeling unwell or has

- a. a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- b. any other common [symptoms of coronavirus](#) - a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
- c. been in [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- d. been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
- e. been diagnosed with Covid-19
- f. been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- g. are a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- h. been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- i. underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- j. returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days

**25.** The website [www.gov.ie/backtoschool](http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool) has all the latest information about schools and COVID-19