Scoil Íosagáin

**Hospital**

**Co. Limerick**

**(061)383197**

**hospitalns@eircom.net**

11/08/2020

Dear Parent / Guardian, Staff Member,

**RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance**

We are currently working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, while working within the guidelines published by the Department of Education.

**Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -**

***Increasing Separation*.** This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximize physical distancing. Practical steps such as locating classes with higher numbers of pupils in the larger classrooms have been taken, for example 6th class will be located upstairs again this year. A physical distance of approx. 1.2m or greater between pupils will apply in the senior half of the school. In Dept of Education publications you will hear of each class being referred to as a bubble. We will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles/classes. At the junior end of the school within the bubbles/classes, children will be organized into pods. A pod is a group of children (up to 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom.

***Decreasing Interaction***. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different classes to interact. There will be routes for various classes to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Luckily a lot of this type of arrangement is already common practice for the children in Scoil Íosagáin. Classes will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground. Thanks to the work of Boards of Management and Parents Associations (past and present) over many years and the contributions of families we are fortunate to have 4 separate playground areas (1 at the Junior side of the school and 3 at the Senior side). Each class will be allocated a playground area thus minimizing any interaction with another class.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying temperatures, colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should **NOT** be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents will be required to collect them from the school with **immediate** effect.

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

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing, use of hand sanitizer and etiquette related to sneezing or coughing. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal. We will have further information next week, including information regarding distribution of school books.

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\_\_\_\_Mrs Marie O’Shea\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_Brendan Moloney\_\_\_\_\_

 Cathaoirleach, An Bhóird Bainistíochta Príomhoide