



# Scoil Thomáis

Laurel Lodge, Castleknock, Dublin 15

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## NUACHTLITIR

Dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians



We are very much looking forward to welcoming back our pupils in Junior Infants, Senior Infants, First & Second Classes as they return to school next Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March.

Whilst this is welcome news for parents, school staff and especially for the children, we understand that for some of you there may be some concerns and fears about the dangers of contracting covid19 virus when at school. Whilst no one can absolutely guarantee that a return to school is risk free, the public health advice now states that it is safe for children to return to school on a phased and managed way as outlined by the recently announced Government Living with Covid Plan. As we have been reminded, the Department of Education and Public Health authorities will keep a close watch on the virus case numbers over the coming weeks and this will inform the decision to allow senior classes to return to school. We all hope that that 3<sup>rd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> classes can return in mid- March and that schools can remain open as planned until the end of this school year. To achieve this, the school community of parents, family members including children and our school staff must work together to stick to the current level 5 restrictions and drive down the virus cases as low as possible. Please note the important school guidance, which must be followed by parents/guardians to help with the March 2021 return to school

*NOTE: All pupils in Junior Infants- 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes must return to school from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March (unless a child is sick or in high risk category or for another good reason). Pupils who are not at school must be marked absent on the daily school attendance record. Parents who choose not to send their children back to school at this time (except those with high risk medical needs) cannot be offered remote learning support from a teacher as an alternative to in-school teaching.*

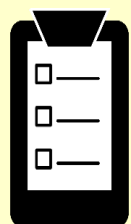
Please read the latest information and advice for parents and pupils about the return to school which is available on the school website [www.scoilthomais.ie](http://www.scoilthomais.ie)

**Parents, please note that your child/ren MUST NOT attend school if they have any Covid like symptoms or if they are in any way unwell.** If your child feels unwell in school parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and asked to collect their child without delay -make sure that there is always an adult available to collect your child should this be necessary. Pupils who come into school feeling unwell or who become sick in school pose a potential risk to classmates and school staff and the school must take all necessary actions in such cases.



**Close Contacts Advice:** Parents must NOT send their child/ren to school if they are close contacts of a person with Covid19, or if they are living with someone who has any Covid symptoms

**Parents/Guardians must co-operate with Public Health and the school** for contact tracing and follow all public health advice in the event of a Covid 19 case or outbreak in the school.



**A Return to School Declaration Form to be completed by Parents/guardians before next Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March for each child returning to school** - you will get this form via an email link from the school and it can be completed online - it only takes a few minutes. This form is a strict requirement by the Department of Education and **MUST** be completed in advance of your child returning to school and when coming back to school after sick leave. Any child who has recently returned from travel abroad **MUST** be quarantined for 14 days and be symptom free before coming back to school. Please note this important requirement for those who may have travelled recently.



There must be **NO CONGREGATING** by parents/adults at or near the school gates before school time or at hometime collection. Only one parent/adult should drop off and collect children in order to minimise the numbers of persons coming to the school over the coming weeks.

**Mandatory Face Mask Policy at the school:** All persons coming to the school for any reason **MUST** wear a face mask. The school reserves the right to refuse entry to persons not wearing masks to ensure the health and safety of our school staff.

**Access to the school will be strictly limited to essential persons only.** The school building and office will not be open to parents/adults except by prior appointment - ring 8201022 to check.

**Parents needing to contact the school:** The school office email is [secretary@scoilthomais.ie](mailto:secretary@scoilthomais.ie) and emails are monitored daily. Parents who wish to communicate with the principal/deputy principal, teachers or other school staff should do so by email or arrange a phone call if necessary. Please note that teachers cannot respond to emails during teaching time - emails will be replied to where necessary as soon as is possible within the teachers timetable so please be patient.



**Hand Sanitiser and Handwashing:** Pupils will be required to sanitise their hands on entry and exit to their classrooms and at regular times during the school day as directed by teacher. Sanitiser units are at each classroom entrance for pupil use. Again the school requests that each pupil brings in their own small bottle of handsanitiser for personal use during the school day - these sanitisers should be stored in pencil cases. Parents should check each morning that your child has his/her sanitiser bottle for school and that it is topped up as needed.

Teachers and SNAs will be reminding pupils to wash their hands regularly during the school day including after using toilets etc and there are paper towels for hand drying in all pupil toilet blocks.



**Classroom Organisation and Breaktimes:** For the term Sept - Dec 2020 teachers organised pupils in groupings called PODs within their classroom. Again for this March return to school pupils will be organised into new PODs by their teachers. Each class will have their own assigned yard area for breaktimes and will play with pupils from their classroom. Pupils will not be allowed to mix with other classes for safety reasons. All classrooms will have windows open during the school day to ensure maximum ventilation as recommended by the health authorities. Please make sure that your child wears suitable warm clothes with their uniform and has a warm coat/jacket.

**Scoil Thomáis is updating it's Covid Response Plan and implementing the procedures as outlined in the Department of Education Return to School Guidance ( Feb 2021)** for the phased return to school for classes as directed. This includes directions on staffing, social distancing organisation of pupils for teaching and learning, infection control measures, upgraded PPE, cleaning routines, classroom ventilation, management of suspected or confirmed Covid cases and limited visitor access to the school. All school staff are directed to wear high grade face masks whilst at school.



**Arrangements for School Entry /Exit Gates.** In order to have an orderly entry of classes each morning and a safe hometime collection please follow the directions ( see next page) from Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March until further notice. Pupils will come to school and go home via specific school gates as we did last term, please note the times for each class level from Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> and - 2<sup>nd</sup>.

All parents/guardians are asked to co-operate with the directions of school staff ( who will be wearing high vis jackets) at morning drop off and hometime collection of pupils - school staff are there to assist parents and pupils so please be helpful and courteous at all times.

**MORNING TIME ENTRY TO SCHOOL FROM 1<sup>st</sup> March for Infants & 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes**

Junior Infants X 3	Entry via Community Centre Gate C	Morning @9.10am	Wait in class lines at <b>Community Centre</b> carpark with one parent/guardian. Pupils walk into yard - teacher meets class in the yard - <i>no parents in yard in morning</i>
Senior Infants X 3	Entry via Castleknock Vale Gate V	Morning @9.10am	Wait in class lines at <b>Casteknock Vale</b> pathway with one parent/guardian. Pupils walk to Entry Door - teacher meets class in the classroom
1 <sup>st</sup> Classes X3	**Entry via Community Centre Gate C	Morning @9am	Wait in class lines at <b>Community Centre</b> carpark with one parent/guardian . Pupils walk to Entry Door - teacher meets class in the classroom
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class X 3	Entry via Shops Gate S	Morning @9am	Wait in class lines at <b>Shops Entrance</b> pathway with one parent/guardian, Pupils walk to Entry Door - teacher meets class in classroom
<b>Support Teachers and SNAs will be at GATES C, V, S to guide pupils and direct them to their correct classroom entrance doors and to help them settle into the morning entry routine</b>			

**HOMETIME COLLECTION FROM 1<sup>st</sup> March for Infants & 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes**

Junior Infants X 3	Exit via Community Centre Gate C	Hometime at 1.40pm	Parent/guardian walk into yard - wait at class lines teacher brings class to exit door for collection
Senior Infants X 3	Exit via Castleknock Vale Gate V	Hometime at 1.40pm	Parent/guardian walk into school front grounds - teacher brings class to exit door for collection
1 <sup>st</sup> Classes X3	** Exit via Community Centre Gate C	Hometime at 2.40pm	Parent/guardian walk into yard - wait as teacher brings class to exit door for collection
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class X 3	Exit via Shops Gate S	Hometime at 2.40pm	Parent/guardian walk into school front grounds - wait as teacher brings class to exit door for collection
<b>Support Teachers and SNAs will be at GATES C, V, S to direct pupils and parents/guardians to exit areas</b>			

**Special Anniversary Remembrance:** Our thoughts are with the family of Calum Farrell RIP over the coming days. Calum was a pupil in 1<sup>st</sup> Class who sadly died on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019. He will be included in the prayers at the 10am Mass on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March which can be viewed via the Church webcam, log onto [www.laurellodgeparish.ie](http://www.laurellodgeparish.ie) His classmates in Ms Lenihan's 3<sup>rd</sup> class are invited to join this Mass online.



**Junior Infants September 2021:** Reminder that parents/guardians who received a Junior Infant offer must return acceptance forms etc by 3pm Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March. Please note this important date.

*Finally, special thanks to our school caretakers Mick and Tony who have worked so hard over the past weeks on the care and maintenance of the school building and grounds. Our hard working school secretaries, Geraldine and Collette have been busy in the school offices doing school administration duties and responding to queries and assisting parents and school staff. Our Cleaners Pauline and Regina have worked tirelessly since January cleaning all areas of the school and all classrooms are fully sanitised for the return to school. Our teachers have kept learning going online with the children since 11<sup>th</sup> January whilst SNAs have supported the care needs of pupils during the weeks of remote learning. Parents/guardians have done great work in supporting children over the past seven weeks whilst balancing working and parenting with all its challenges.*



Please be assured that your Infant, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Class child/ren will settle back to school surprisingly well as they did in September 2020 and they will quickly adjust to the school routines. The children will enjoy meeting their classmates and teachers again and getting back to school work and learning. We wish everyone well for this phase of the return to school and fingers crossed that all classes from 3<sup>rd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> can be back to school very soon too.

**M. McGarry, Principal and M. Ryan, Deputy Principal**  
**Dated this 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021**