



Brannoxtown Community National School
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Brannoxtown Community National School (BCNS)

Update for Parents: 21st August 2020

Dear Parents,

As we prepare to re-open Brannoxtown Community National School next week, I want to thank you for your support since the March closure. A lot has happened since we last met. I know you and your children may be apprehensive about the return to school. I can reassure you that we've had a productive summer of preparations for a safe return to school for all children. All staff have completed induction training on returning to school and have contributed to our school's *Covid-19 Response Plan*. This note gives you a flavour of some changes you'll see when we re-open. Most changes relate to our Covid-19 planning but we've also progressed some exciting new developments such as our new outdoor furniture, being installed later today. You'll find this note along with our school calendar and other back-to-school items on our [school website](#). Dawn, Anne Marie and I very much look forward to welcoming you and your children back to school next week.

Kind regards,

Re-opening Week

- Children are returning to school on a phased-basis:
 - Wednesday 26th: Meetings with Junior Infant families
 - Thursday 27th : Meetings with new families and Junior Infant children start school.
 - Friday 28th: All children are back to school.

Arriving at the School

- Parking is available in the Baptist Church for Junior Infant parents and parents who wish to walk children to the school yard. All other parents use the school set-down area.
- We ask parents to remain in the driver seat when your car stops at the set-down. The teacher on duty will open the car door and help your child to the school yard.

Entrance to the School Building

- Children in Junior and Senior Infants will use the side door to get to/from their classroom. This side entrance leads directly to the Junior Room from the playground.
- Children in all other classes will use the main door.
 - Children in 1st, 2nd and 3rd Class will use the ramp.
 - Children in 5th and 6th Class will use the steps.

Your Child's Belongings

- Please ensure your child's belongings (books, lunch box, stationery and uniform tops) are clearly labelled with his/her name. This is important for us to help children to manage their belongings.
- We have added storage containers and coat hooks in each classroom to help your child to manage his/her belongings: coat, bag and lunch-box.

- Shared stationery/books are removed from classrooms. Children will use their own belongings. All school items used by children (e.g., maths manipulatives) will be thoroughly cleaned after use.

Classroom Organisation: Bubbles and Pods

- The Department has asked schools to use a Pod (grouping) system to plan for and effectively manage children's movement and interactions in the school.
- Our school (40 children) is a Bubble. It has four Pods: Junior Infants, Senior Infants, Middle Classes (1st, 2nd and 3rd) and Senior Classes (5th and 6th).
- Children will play and work together in their class Pods. For example, children in Junior Classes will use play-resources for their Pod; these will be cleaned daily after school.
- Floor signage reminds all adults and children to keep left on the stairs. Other signage reminds staff and children about hand-washing, etc.
- Classroom doors and windows will remain open as often as possible to maximise ventilation.

Hand Cleaning and Hygiene

- Hand washing is scheduled for all children several times during the school day:
 - On arrival at school
 - Before eating or drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After playing outdoors
 - When hands are physically dirty
 - When we cough or sneeze.
- Touch-free hand sanitisers are installed throughout the school for use after handwashing.
- Each classroom has a PPE Container for staff with disposable masks, gloves, aprons and a thermometer, to be used only if/as needed.

Social Distancing

- Younger children (up to 2nd Class) are not expected to maintain physical distancing.
- Children from 3rd to 6th Class are to maintain a distance of 1 metre, shoulder to shoulder, indoors.
- Our large classrooms and small numbers have enabled us to plan classroom layouts which maximise the available space while ensuring classrooms are still inviting spaces for all children.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres is recommended for all adults (parents and staff).
- Stencils to show 2 metres distance will be visible at gates and doors to the school.

Your Child's Curriculum

- Children's wellbeing will be central to our curriculum this year.
- Our school is using the Weaving Wellbeing programme with children from 2nd to 6th Class.
- Physical Education time is increased this year to provide more time for physical exercise and games outdoors.
- Teaching and learning in literacy (English and Irish) and numeracy (Maths) will begin with children's own starting points.
- Teachers will use books and resources for your child's previous and current school years, as determined by your child's starting points for learning.
- Much of this year's planning for learning is thematic. Children will learn in different subject areas using the same themes and topics which are interesting and relevant to them.

School Uniform

- Crested uniform items are available for collection from Tuesday, 25th August.
- Planned tracksuit days for all children from 1st to 6th Class this year are: Friday, Monday and Tuesday.

- We accept that this schedule may not be feasible this year. To facilitate regular cleaning, families can be flexible with the days when children wear their tracksuit/formal uniform.
- In addition to crests and ties, a small number of new uniform items (unworn, with tags) are available for purchase from the school. Some cleaned, previously-used items are also available for purchase at a minimal cost. Details are available from Liz Kavanagh.

Visits to the School

- To keep our children safe, all visits to the school are by appointment only.
- All adult visitors to the school must wear masks.
- Appointments (e.g., to pay the General Purpose Fee or meet your child's teacher) can be requested by contacting Liz Kavanagh: brannoxtowncns@kwetb.ie.
- When coming to the school for your appointment, please use the main door.
- Use the buzzer to let Liz know you have arrived.
- On entry, use the hand-sanitiser and sign the Log Book adding arrival and leaving times.

New Staff

- This year, we welcome two new, part-time staff to Brannoxtown CNS.
- Emer Miley will work with children on Mondays in her role as Special Education Teacher (SET).
- Angela Cox will work with children in Middle and Senior Classes on Wednesdays.

Afterschool Club

- We welcome Suzanne Dowling, Busy Fingers Creche, to Brannoxtown CNS to lead our Afterschool Club, Monday to Thursday, 1:30-4:30.
- The Club will support children to complete homework and to have fun with their friends, outdoors and in Room 4 (upstairs, above Dawn's room).
- The Club has a maximum of 12 places, daily. For parents who have committed to the service, their child's place is guaranteed. Flexibility to offer one-off places on a given day will depend on availability.
- Some places are still available. If you'd like to know more, all information about the [Afterschool Club](#) is available on our site.

Cleaning

- Painting during the summer included metal and woodwork, e.g., pipes, radiators and doors.
- A new *Cleaning Framework* prepared for our school describes the *Daily Clean* at Brannoxtown CNS this year including the equipment to be used, hygiene supplies, and specific areas/spaces to be cleaned.
- The *Deep Clean* for re-opening is scheduled for this Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th.

Outdoor Furniture and Garden

- Outdoor furniture for children will be installed at 7pm this evening with thanks to Mitzie Day (Parent Nominee on the Board of Management), for all her support this summer.
- Our new outdoor furniture includes a Pallet House, Mud Kitchen, Outdoor Classroom (benches and tree stumps) and wall-mounted blackboards.
- All classes will spend more time outdoors this year—exploring and investigating our school grounds and local environment.
- The Afterschool Club will be held outdoors, as much as possible.
- Parents are welcome to help us develop our outdoor play spaces, raised beds and garden. Please contact Liz to express your interest.