

Brannoxtown Community National School (BCNS) Return-to-School Note for Parents: 27th August 2021

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the new school year at Brannoxtown Community National School. We've been busy preparing for our new Junior Infants who start school on Wednesday, 1st September and all children on Thursday, 2nd September. Ten new families join our school this year and we extend a very warm welcome to all new and returning families. Restrictions permitting, we hope to host a parents' gathering before the October break, to facilitate parents to meet one-another and to informally check-in on school plans. We are delighted to also welcome a new staff member, Deirdre Murphy. Múinteoir Deirdre was appointed following Múinteoir Anne Marie's resignation this summer, for personal reasons. We wish Anne Marie every happiness following her July wedding and thank her sincerely for her contribution to our school. You'll find a note and photo from Múinteoir Deirdre below, along with details of class allocations for this school year and other updates. Your child's teacher will contact you during the first week of school to connect on the Class Dojo app. We'll continue to use the app this year to share special classroom moments and notices with parents and to receive messages about planned absences from school. You'll find this note along with our school calendar and other back-to-school items on our website: www.brannoxtowncns.ie.

With our very best wishes for the new school year,

Sarah FitzPatrick

A. Calendar, Afterschool Club and Classes

School Re-opening Dates

- Wednesday 1st: Junior Infants start school
- Thursday 2nd : All children attend school

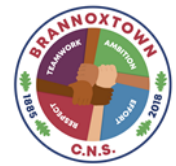
Phased-enrolment for Junior Infant Children

- 1st - 3rd September: 8:50 to 11:00 (Bring snack only)
- 6th - 17th September: 8:50 to 12:00 (Bring snack and lunch)
- 20th September onwards, normal schedule: 8:50 to 1:30 (Bring snack and lunch)

Busy Fingers Afterschool Club

Sinéad Leydon will lead our Afterschool Club, beginning on Thursday, September 2nd at 1:30pm. Sinéad currently manages and teaches in a busy Dublin preschool. She brings a wealth of experience and expertise from 18 years working in the early years sector and school sectors (e.g., as an SNA at primary and second level). Sinéad's values are strongly aligned with our school's values. Sinéad believes that children learn best through hands-on, play-based experiences. She is an advocate for the outdoor classroom. She promises a year of learning and laughter in Afterschool Club-a place where all children will be welcomed with love and respect. Sinéad is available to meet parents informally at the school next Thursday morning (2nd) at 9am and parking is available in the Baptist Church car park. Please contact Sinéad by email/phone to confirm: sineadleydon@yahoo.co.uk; 087-3201730. Sinéad welcomes an email/call from any parent who can't meet her next Thursday morning but who wishes to contact her before the Club begins.





Class Allocations

- Junior Infants to 2nd Class: Múinteoir Deirdre (Room 2 – Junior Room)
- 3rd to 6th Class: Múinteoir Sarah (Room 1 – Senior Room) & Múinteoir Angela on Wednesdays.
- Special Education Teacher (SET) for all children: Múinteoir Dawn (Room 3 – SET Room)
 - 3rd and 4th Class: Maths and Irish with Múinteoir Dawn, morning session to snack, daily.
 - 1st and 2nd Class: Irish with Múinteoir Dawn, middle session to lunch, daily.

Múinteoir Deirdre

I am delighted to take-on the position of Junior Room teacher at Brannoxtown CNS. I have been teaching for 12 years both in Dublin and abroad. I spent five years living in Santiago, Chile where I was lucky enough to work in a progressive British School as an English and Music teacher. I am passionate about music and I love to play the piano and sing whenever possible. I also love sports and I play tennis and hockey. I recently completed a Masters in Educational Leadership and my research topic focused on the idea of Ethical Leadership. I love teaching and I am very excited to welcome children to the Junior Room at Brannoxtown CNS. I have been learning about children's many wonderful learning experiences at Brannoxtown CNS so far. I've been getting to know children a little from chatting with their previous teachers and looking at all their work to-date. I know that together, we will enjoy a year filled with laughter, learning and lots of fun!



B. Curriculum, Student Committees and Learning

Children's Wellbeing - September's Homework

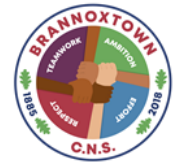
During September, we're spotlighting children's wellbeing in school and at home. Homework for September will focus on:

- Good sleep routines
- Healthy eating habits
- Positive behaviours and
- Safe routines to prevent covid-infection.

We'll begin the school year with a strong focus on what positive behaviour looks and sounds like. Parents will receive copies of school policies for approval/signing in September, beginning with our 'Positive Behaviour Policy'. Children from 1st to 6th class will receive a child-friendly version and children in infant classes will be introduced to a picture-version of the policy.

Your Child's Curriculum

- Children's wellbeing will be central to our curriculum again this year. Our school is using the Weaving Wellbeing programme with all children from 2nd to 6th Class.
- Physical Education time is increased again this year to provide more time for physical exercise and games outdoors.
- Literacy initiatives this year include Words Their Way and Writing Workshop. Our reading programmes and class novels have expanded to further support children's reading comprehension and fluency.
- Much of this year's planning for learning is thematic. Children will learn in different subject areas using themes and topics which are interesting and relevant to them.
- Student committees for the Active School Flag and Green Schools initiative will continue their important work. A new Student Council will be established in the first half-term and parents will be invited to contribute to the set-up of the Council in the coming weeks.



Furniture and Equipment

- All outdoor furniture (pallet house, mud kitchen, benches and wall-mounted blackboards) has been varnished this month. Parents are invited to help us develop our outdoor play spaces, raised beds and garden – please let us know if you have some ideas to share!
- A new Epson EB530 Short Throw Projector was installed in Room 1 (Junior Room) and a new wall mount was gifted to us by St. Joseph's Mercy Primary School, Navan.
- Two new iPads (10.2-inch iPad, 128GB, with keyboard case and screen protector) are being purchased for student-use with our sincere thanks to parents for a donation of €1000 to the school in June.

C. COVID-19 Health and Safety

Return-to-School Form

- Staff have been vaccinated and will have completed their COVID-19 Return-to-Work Form.
- Parents are asked to complete the Covid-19 Return-to-School Form for your child(ren) using the link sent via text: <https://forms.office.com/r/7uZeKqjCb>.

Classroom Organisation: Bubbles and Pods

- Our school is a Bubble. It has four Pods:
 - Junior and Senior Infants
 - 1st and 2nd Class
 - 3rd and 4th Class
 - 5th and 6th Class
- 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 use.
- Classroom doors and windows will remain open as often as possible to maximise ventilation; the new CO2 monitors are due for delivery and installation early in September.
- Floor signage reminds all adults and children to keep left on the stairs. Other signage reminds staff and children about hand-washing at a minimum of five points during the school day.

Your Child's Belongings

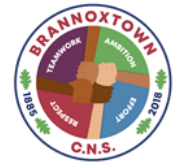
- Please ensure your child's belongings (books, lunch box, stationery and uniform tops) are clearly labelled with his/her name. This is important for us to help children to manage their belongings.
- Children will leave their pencil case in school for school-use only.
- All school items used by children (e.g., maths manipulatives) will be thoroughly cleaned after use, daily.

School Uniform

- Crested uniform items are available for collection from Thursday, 2nd September.
- Tracksuit days for all children from 1st to 6th Class this year are: Friday, Monday and Tuesday.
- 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. Details are available from Liz Kavanagh.

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.

School Set-down & Entrance

- Parking is available in the Baptist Church for Junior Infant parents and new parents who wish to walk children to the school yard. All other parents use the school set-down area.
- At the school set-down, we ask parents to remain in the driver seat when your car stops. The teacher on duty will open the car door and help your child to the school yard.
- Two school entrances will be used this year:
 - Junior Infants to 2nd Class: Use the side door from the playground to the Junior Room.
 - 3rd to 6th Class: Use the main door from the playground to the Senior Room.

Social Distancing

- 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.
 - Children up to 2nd Class are not expected to maintain physical distancing.
 - Children from 3rd to 6th Class will be supported to maintain a distance of 1 metre, shoulder to shoulder, indoors.
 - Physical distancing of 2 metres will be maintained for all adults (parents and staff).

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.

Cleaning

- All classrooms have been painted over the summer and a final deep-clean is scheduled for this weekend.
- The *Cleaning Framework* for our school describes the *Daily Clean* including the equipment to be used, hygiene supplies, and specific areas/spaces to be cleaned.

