



ST.ATTRACTA'S N.S.
Lowpark, Charlestown, Co.Mayo

Return to School - September 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please see our Logistics Plan which has been agreed and ratified by the BOM of our school. We hope all our families are looking forward to the return to school. Please see all the changes and procedures that will be put in place to help protect our staff and pupils. We appreciate your cooperation with these matters.

Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

Assumptions

- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system
- The school will remain split into 2 groups with each group having separate break times, lunch times and finishing times.
- Groups will be constituted initially of
 - (a) Sásta, Spraoui, Senior Infants, 1st Class, 3rd Class & 5th Class
 - (b) Sonas, Junior Infants, 2nd Class, 4th Class & 6th Class
- The day will include 2 x 20-minute breaks
- Within each class from Junior Infants to 6th, the children will be further divided into pods. All pupils will sit in pods with a minimum distance of 1-metre being maintained between each pod. Also, pupils from 3rd to 6th Class will not be able to change from one pod to another until after the October mid-term break.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all classroom entry points, in all classrooms and support rooms.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Automatic sanitiser dispensers have been installed at all four entry points to the school i.e. at each entrance. Push sanitizers dispensers also have been installed in each classroom. Small pump dispensers will also be available throughout the school.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message. At a minimum the pupils will:

- Sanitise hands before entering the classroom
- Wash hands before eating
- Sanitise hands before going to yard
- Sanitise hands before entering the classroom (wash hands if visibly dirty)



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In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day. Waste will be collected daily from classrooms, offices and other areas within the school.

Changes to Classroom Layouts

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in *Class Bubbles*. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings 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.

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble, however, we will be adopting a pod system in these younger classes.

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be grouped in pods and each pod distanced in so far as is practicable, with at least 1m achieved in all rooms. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible. Physical MDF Pods with Polycarbonate Screens will continue to be used in all classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class.

Teaching and Learning

The Department of Education have advised schools that they do not require any new or additional action to their current Covid-19 Response Plan. Therefore, in keeping with Department of Education Guidance, priority for teaching and learning will be placed on Numeracy, English, Irish, Physical education and SPHE. Using mindfulness and extra physical activity throughout the day will be very important.

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for those pupils with complex needs.

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope



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From day one, it is important to address Covid-19 with the pupils, reassuring the boys and girl about safety, reminding about hygiene and coughing etiquette, social distancing etc. Some useful advice is available on:

- <https://assets.gov.ie/71270/020b6865d1bd49429573570c195c05dd.pdf>
- <https://www.unicef.ie/stories/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- <https://www.crc.ie/talking-to-children-about-covid-19/>

Arrival at school

- Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds before/after school. To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not come onto the school grounds before the school gates and doors open at 9.15 am.
- We are implementing a designated arrival window. 9.15 am - 9:30 am.
- All staff members are asked to be in school by 9.05 am to receive pupils.
- **We ask parents/guardians to not loiter at the front of the school as this will lead to traffic congestion.**
- **We also ask that all parents wear masks at school gates/collection areas when escorting and collecting children.**
- Children will enter the school grounds via the main school gate and walk directly to their classrooms on arrival. School signage will be on display and staff members (including Special Education Teachers, SNA and the Principal) will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to direct them to their classrooms.
- Each class should proceed immediately to their classroom via their designated entry door.
- Older siblings are not required to escort younger siblings to their classroom.
- The teachers on duty will supervise entrance to the building via the designated entrance points.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by email or by contacting the school office office@stattractasns.ie 094-9254905. Teacher email addresses will be communicated to each family.



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Class Entry/Exit Points

Teacher	Class	Entry /Exit Point	Arrival Time
Ms. Duffy	Junior Infants	Front Door Right Hand Side of School 2	9.30am
Ms. Ruane	Senior Infants	Back Door Infant Yard 3	9.15am
Mrs Quinn / Ms. Delaney	1 st Class	Front Door Right Hand Side of School 2	9.15am
Mr. Rushe	2 nd Class	Back Door Infant Yard 3	9.25am
Ms. Henry	3 rd Class	Back Door Infant Yard 4	9.15am
Ms. McHugh	4 th Class	Back Door Infant Yard 4	9.25am
Mrs McDonagh	5 th Class	Main Entrance 1	9.15am
Ms Tierney	6 th Class	Main Entrance 1	9.25am
Ms. McNicholas	Súgradh	Main Entrance 1	9.30am
Ms. Durkin	Sásta	Main Entrance New Building	9.30am
Ms. Burke	Spraoi	Main Entrance New Building	9.30am
Mrs Colson	Sonás	Main Entrance New Building	9.30am

End of School Day

- All students will be escorted to the front of the school by their class teacher.
- Junior and Senior Infant children are asked to wait on the designated footprint stencils that are marked on the school main entrance pavement. Each pupil will then leave one at a time.
- Classes will finish at the following times. Each class will be accompanied by their teacher to the front of the school.

Pick Up times for each class			
1.55pm	2.05pm	2.55pm	3:05pm
Senior Infants	Junior Infants Súgradh Sásta	1 st Class 3 rd Class 5 th Class	2 nd Class 4 th Class 6 th Class Spraoi Sonás

- Outdoor supervision will be provided until 3:10 pm.
- Children not collected will have to wait in an area in front of the staffroom for safe release to parents/guardians.
- Parents & guardians are asked to maintain a social distance outside the school gate.
- **This arrival/drop off system will apply rain, hail or shine so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather!**



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Summarised Timetable for Drop Off and Pick Up

9.05 am	All staff to be present to support arrival of pupils Class teachers, SET teachers, SNAs and Principal to support arrival of pupils
9.15 am – 9:30 am	Arrival of pupils - No adults to enter the school grounds.
Children to go straight to their classrooms on arrival. <i>See entrance door information above</i>	
2:10 pm	Junior Infants
1:55 pm	Senior Infants
2.05 pm	Súgradh & Spraoi classes
2.55:pm	First, Third and Fifth Class
3:05 pm	Second, Fourth, Sixth, Spraoi & Sonas Classes

Collection of Children during the School Day

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should phone the office to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to wait at the front blue door.
- The school secretary will record the early leaving information
- No adult should enter the school building, unless approval is obtained from the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Break Times

Súgradh/Sásta classes Senior Infants/First/Third and Fifth class	Break: 10.40-11 Lunch: 12.20-12.40
Sonas/Spraoi classes Junior Infants/Second/Fourth/Sixth class	Break: 11.10-11.30 Lunch: 12.50-1.10

Classes will be assigned specific areas for break times during which they will not mix with other classes. Pupils from the same class can play freely with each other but physical contact will be kept to a minimum where possible. Each break will be supervised by two teachers attached to the classes on yard. Teachers must escort their class to their designated yard. When the bell rings to signal the end of yard, pupils will freeze and then line up on designated line positions which will be spaced apart.

Lunches

Pupils will be given time to eat lunch in class as usual. We ask parents to remind pupils to eat directly from their lunch boxes, not to use the surface of the table to lay their food on. Also, sharing of food is not permitted. Unfortunately, under new guidelines, the school is not permitted to fill water bottles for pupils. Pupils will not be permitted to fill bottles from the staffroom. Lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be washed thoroughly, inside and out each day.

Personal Equipment/Belongings

- In so far as possible, it is requested that children from 1st to 6th Class will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment.



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- This should be kept in school and separate items should be kept at home for homework as necessary.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

Library and Guided Reading

All class shared reading materials will be placed into a sealed box for 72 hours before going back into circulation (i.e. into the box on Friday and placed back on shelves on Monday).

PPE

The Department of Education advise that facemasks should be worn by all staff who cannot maintain a 2m social distance from pupils. The BOM are supplying all staff with disposable and reusable facemasks as well as a face shield. Gloves and aprons will also be provided for providing intimate care or first aid.

Corridors

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection, however, we will encourage the practice of keeping to the right when in the corridors.

Learning Support

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised, where possible, to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of a bubble.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children from 3rd to 6th Class receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, if no substitute teacher can be sourced or there is no local arrangement available in the school, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

PE

PE will take place outdoors and use of equipment will be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. The designated PE days are Tuesday and Thursday every week. PE uniform is necessary on these days.



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Homework

Homework will continue to be assigned online via Seesaw or Google Classroom, depending on class level.

Uniforms

Uniforms and tracksuits should ideally be worn on alternate days, ie Uniforms on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and Tracksuits on Tuesday and Thursday.

Forgotten Items

In the event that you need to drop something to school for your child please contact the school office and arrangements will be made. Please bag and label the item that you wish to be given to your child. Please do not enter the school.

Coats

Unfortunately, pupils will not be allowed to hang up coats side by side. Coats must remain in the school bag or under the students chair.

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 are the procedures that will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by the school secretary/Principal.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route (nearest exit door) by a member of staff, Principal, Deputy Principal. The staff member will 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
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms, if one is available / appropriate. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- 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.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be 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 bin provided
- 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
- 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.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- Should a second isolation area be required, the front glass porch will be used.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed.



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Children who should not attend school

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children who are generally unwell
- Any child displaying symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant). In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant). They are:
 - a fever (high temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or above).
 - a new cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
 - shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
 - loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
 - Fatigue
 - Aches and pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE and School Website is advised.

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school:

If a child is in the very high-risk category is not able to attend school for an extended period of time under the direction of a consultant / GP, suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared through the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant).



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FAQs

- **What is happening with homework?** Homework will be assigned on Seesaw/Google Classroom.
- **Can I send in a bottle of sanitiser with my child?** Yes, but please remind your child it is for their personal use only.
- **Can my child wear a facemask?** Yes. Department of Education has clarified that the public health guidance in respect of mask wearing has not changed regarding primary school age children. It is not the case that this precludes any parent deciding that their primary school child should wear a face covering.
- **Will staff be wearing facemasks?** Yes, all staff members will need to wear face masks.
- **Will Parent Teacher meetings be taking place?** At the minute Parent Teacher meetings will not take place in the traditional format. The Department have recommended that parent-teacher meetings should continue remotely. If they are in person, physical distancing and the wearing of normal face masks should continue.
- **What if I need to speak with my child's teacher?** Please contact Geraldine in the office via phone or your child's teacher via email.
- **What happens if my child's teacher is out sick?** Every effort to find a substitute will be made. If one cannot be found and no local school arrangements are available, the class will be asked to stay at home.
- **What happens if my child forgets their lunch or drinks?** The school will contact you, subsequently you can drop lunch/drinks to the school at a designated area for your child.
- **My child has hay fever and sneezes quite a bit, will he/she be sent home?** If your child has an underlying condition such as hay fever (as many of us have) please make sure the class teacher is aware. The symptoms we will be keeping an eye out for:
 - A fever (38 degrees Celsius or above)
 - Ongoing cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Loss or change to sense of smell or taste
- **What if my child is sent home with a suspected case of Covid 19?** We would advise that you contact your GP/HSE for further advice. If a child is unwell, they should under no circumstances be sent back to school.
- **Are parents permitted in the school building?** No, parents are not permitted access to the school building without prior approval from the Principal or Deputy Principal. The Department of Education have recommended that visitors to the school should be by appointment only.
- **Why are pupils not allowed onto the school grounds before 9:15 am?** As there would be insufficient staff to guarantee social distancing would be ensured, we cannot allow pupils onto the playground.
- **My child is in a "pod" with some other children, can they still play with their other classmates at break time?** Yes, absolutely.



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- **Are 3rd to 6th classes in “pods”?** Yes, they will be seated in pods of 4-6 pupils. The pupils in each pod will remain together until the next school holiday.
- **If my child falls on yard/gets a bump or cut?** Our First Aid policy will be followed, but staff are required to wear PPE to apply first aid.
- **Will teachers talk to the boys and girls about Covid-19?** Yes, from day one we will be reteaching cough etiquette, hand hygiene, reinforcing the idea of social distancing/reduced physical contact and chatting (in an age appropriate way) about Covid-19. The aim will be to offer reassurance and promote calmness and safety.
- **Will the children wear their uniform?** Yes. We suggest that uniforms and tracksuits are worn on alternate days. We would encourage families to try and keep uniforms as clean as possible. The school will display leniency and discretion to families in regard to pupils not wearing correct uniform to school on a given day due to it being washed at home.
- **How often will the school be cleaned?** The whole school will be entirely cleaned at the end of every day, this will include all classrooms, toilets and common touch areas etc. Classrooms are fogged to remove germs and viruses regularly throughout the week.
- **When are Return to School Declarations required?** All parents must complete the Return to School Declaration for each child before the child resumes school. This can be completed on the Aladdin Connect App. You will be required to complete this form after any absences from school. Eg. If your child is absent from school on Thursday and is returning to school on Friday, you will need to complete this form before the start of school on Friday. The declaration is available on Aladdin after 3pm.