



Gurteen Road
Ballyfermot
Dublin 10

01 6265207
mqaone@outlook.com

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you and your families are keeping well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during our remote learning period due to the COVID-19 situation. It was appreciated greatly.

We are now hoping to re-open our school safely, in line with current guidance and recommendations. Re-opening the school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our School Community. We will all be called on to play our part in ensuring that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner which prevents the spread of the virus and allows the vital work of Teaching and Learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible.

In line with this, the DES COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools and our COVID-19 Policy Statement is on our school website.

We are currently 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, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing will be achieved in two ways: Increasing separation and decreasing interaction.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying 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 asked to collect them from the school.

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>

www.maryqueenofangels1.ie

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and respiratory etiquette. 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.

The BoM and the School Leadership Team have been working to ensure a safe return to school for all pupils and staff in two weeks' time. We have now finalised our plans for drop-off and collection of the children every day.

We appreciate your support as we try to safely reopen the school building. If at all possible we request you not to come into the school building unless it is by appointment. Doors will open at 8.50am and a hand sanitisation station will be present at the entrance. We appreciate that dropping off the Junior & Senior Infant pupils to the front door is essential, but for the older pupils a drop off at the school gate is important and all students proceed straight to their classrooms (more details to follow). Breakfast club will not be open due to the current climate.

Working together we hope to be able to progress the reopening in as safe a manner as possible for all. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year.

We are looking forward to welcoming all our pupils and parents/guardians back to school for the 2020/2021 school year on Monday, 31st August.

It will take some time for all of us to get used to the "new circumstances" as we become familiar with the new routines and procedures designed to keep everyone safe and to prevent the spread of the virus. There will, undoubtedly, be some unforeseen challenges and we will deal with these as they arise.

We would like to thank you for your co-operation in making preparations to date and look forward to working with you as we assist the children in adapting to the necessary changes. We are also conscious of the fact that our pupils have not been in school since March and that they are looking forward to coming back to school to meet their friends again. We are aware that our new pupils are beginning a school year at a challenging time and have made plans to ensure that their arrival will be as free from stress as possible. We are really looking forward to welcoming our children back to school and will be doing all that we can to ensure that the return to school is a safe and enjoyable experience for the children.

Regards,

Maurice Sweeney

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