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Welcome Back

As we start into our new school year – the most anticipated new year ever, I'd like to welcome everyone back to school. I'm sure you will all agree that it is absolutely fantastic to have opened our school gates to all the boys and girls and staff last Friday. We were closed for far too long.

It has taken a huge effort to co-ordinate the reopening of the school and I would like to thank the whole staff for pulling together both during lockdown and recently in ensuring the school was open on time last Friday.

Yes there are some changes to school life this year, but the most important thing is that the children are back to school and that we all take some time in getting familiar with the new routines and get back to doing the traditional activities that we always do in school. To that end we will also ease our way back into homework over the coming weeks.

I sincerely hope your child has settled back to school and is delighted to finally be back. Please continue to keep working with us and keep in touch should you have any concerns.

I wish you all the best for the year ahead and let's all continue to do our bit to keep each other safe.

Regards,

Alan Hobbins

Small Change to Arrangements

As you know we have introduced a staggered arrangement for mornings and home time. This has worked really well and we would like to thank everyone for their co-operation on this. As a result, we would like to make a small change in an attempt to make the situation easier for families and for the children. We will reduce the interval between groups to 5 minutes instead of 10. We will then be able to give the children 15 minutes at small break instead of 10 minutes. Also this will help greatly on wet mornings.

Red Group:	Start time 9am. Finish: 1:40 (Infants). 2:45pm (1st – 6th)
Orange Group:	Start time 9:05am. Finish 1:45 (Infants). 2:50 pm (1st – 6th)
Green Group:	Start time: 9:10am. Finish 2:55pm

We will phase this in over the next two days and start in earnest from Monday 7th September.

We appreciate this is another tweak to the system, but as many children and families are waiting outside the gates at these times, we hope this will make things more straight forward for you the parents. At the assigned times, the children can walk straight to their doors and teachers will meet them at the door. For the junior classes, teachers will still come out to the front to meet the children.

We would encourage all those who are waiting outside in the mornings to practice social distancing and wear face coverings if required.

Junior Infants

We are so happy that all our boys and girls in Junior Infants have settled into school so well this year. We are all really proud of them. To that end, we would like them to start a little bit earlier in the mornings. So from next Monday, **Ms Banks' class will start at 9am each morning and finish at 12:30. Ms O Reilly's class will start at 9:05 and finish at 12:40.**

Communication

As we are now required to limit access to the school, we would ask that if you are to come to the school, that you make sure you are wearing a mask. Children can be collected from the office and items which may need to be dropped in can be left just inside the door. Ann Marie or Carol will direct you as always.

Should you need to speak with the class teacher, please organise a **meeting** ahead of time. Perhaps a phone call could suffice.

Please ensure you have downloaded the **Aladdin App** as most of our communication this year will be through this app.

Absences can now be entered and explained on Aladdin.

Please limit the number of notes into the class teacher. An email to the school can be sent and this will be forwarded to the class teacher.

Over the coming months and year, as we all get to grips with the new routines, we will continue to keep you all updated as best and as routinely as possible.

Children's Health

As parents we all have concerns over our children's health and this year more than ever there are many questions and queries. Please keep in mind that we are all in this together and we will all help each other and our children as best we can. Below are some questions & answers and things that need to be considered. As a golden rule, **If Unwell, Stay at Home.**

Please familiarise yourself with the general symptoms of Covid 19, namely, Cough, High temperature (38), Shortness of Breath, Loss of Taste or Smell.

We all know that children develop colds at this time of year when returning to school and will do so throughout the year. If at any stage your child(ren) require paracetamol or ibuprofen (calpol or neurofen) they must not attend school. Contact should be made with the GP to assess the need for a test. Siblings should stay at home also in the first instance as a precaution. The child should not attend school until symptoms improve.

If a sick family member is awaiting a test and/or test results, due to Covid symptoms, then **all** family members should isolate and should not attend school unless otherwise directed by the HSE.

We have strict guidelines in place if we suspect a case of Covid here in the school or in a classroom.

If a child presents to school with symptoms, we will ask parents to collect their child and contact should be made with the GP. We will follow public health advice quite strictly thereafter. Schools do **not** need to inform parents that a pupil or teacher has been sent home from school due to their symptoms. **Other pupils or staff do not need to be removed from class.** If it is deemed by the GP that a Covid test be carried out on a child, then other siblings will need to be collected from the school.

What happens next?

If it is deemed by the GP that a child requires a Covid test, then any other household contact should **also** be sent home from the school setting.

Parents should inform the school by phone and/or by email (outside of school hours) of the results of the test and the advice given by the HSE / GP.

Test Results

If a negative result is diagnosed the child in question should remain at home until he/she is clinically well enough to return to school, unless otherwise instructed by the HSE.

Should a positive result be diagnosed, then contact tracing will be implemented and HSE / Public health advice will be strictly adhered to. The regional Medical Health Officer will make contact with the school and will undertake a Public Health Risk Assessment and advise of further actions to be taken.

Who will have to stay at home following a positive case?

At this point it is very difficult to give a definitive answer to this question. The definition of close contacts within schools will vary from school to school. **All** necessary information will be provided to the HSE. This may include contact information for children within the class setting – pod/bubble. The HSE will liaise with the relevant close contacts and advise accordingly.

Will the whole school or part of the school stay at home following a case?

This decision will be made following the Assessment of Risk carried out by the Medical Health Officer. There are a number of criteria to be assessed when making this decision and each school setting is unique in this regard.

Holidays 2020/2021

October (Mon.)26 th – Friday Oct. 30 th	Mid Term
December 22 nd at 3pm	Christmas Holidays
January 6 th	Return to school
February 18 th + 19 th	Mid Term
March 17 th	St. Patrick's Day
March 26 th at 3pm	Easter Holidays
April 12 th	Return to school
May 3 rd – 7 th	Bank holiday + holiday
June 7 th + 8 th	Bank holiday + holiday
June 30 th	Summer Holidays

Pupil Insurance

Pupil Insurance is optional and also available to be paid online or at the school office. If you are paying cash, please complete the Application form and put the signed part of the form into the envelope with the payment.

The option to sign up for pupil insurance is available only until September 30th.

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Please make sure to label all your children's belongings, especially jumpers and tracksuit tops.

We will have very limited Lost + Found this year because of Covid 19.

Children will be able to view lost property from last year soon in the PE Hall.

Book Rental, Art/Crafts, Equipment & Photocopying 2020/21

This year the charge has been reduced in order to compensate for the school days lost to the recent pandemic closure.

Payment for Book Rental 2020/21 can be made securely online through your Aladdin Connect - Payments page - using a debit or credit card.

Cash & cheque payments can be made at the school office between 9am - 12 noon. Put your payment (or part-payment) in an envelope marked with: your child's name & class & the amount in the envelope. Drop the envelope into the school office (or your child can give it to their teacher). A receipt will be issued from the office and sent home.

Book Rental should be paid before the end of September 2020 please. As usual, the Department of Education and Skills provides a Book Grant for some families. If you feel that you will experience difficulty meeting the payment, please contact the principal – Mr. Alan Hobbins – 045 903 091 or email principal@caraghns.ie

School Crests

Any family that would like to purchase school crests can now do so through the Aladdin payments page. Crests are €5 each. On the [payments page](#): Tick the box beside 'Crests' and enter the total amount of money for the number of crests that you need - One crest €5, two crests €10, three crests €15 etc.

When the payment is made online, the crests will be given to your child in school.

Aladdin Connect

Parents please note that Caragh NS primarily communicates with you through Aladdin Connect. This is both efficient and cost effective for the school and parents. If you are not connected or are having some difficulty with your connection, please contact the office (office@caraghns.ie).

Connect is used by parents to update personal details, change address/phone information, read school notices, grant permission slips, make payments to school, see test results & reports, let the school know the reason for a child being absent, view homework.....

If you have downloaded the App, please complete the process and validate you mobile phone number – if you don't validate, the system will continue to text you, which is expensive for the school.

Medical Conditions

Parents, please ensure that the school principal is notified of any medical condition suffered by your child, and of any medication and/or medical equipment to deal with in an emergency.

Parents should read the full Admin. of Medications policy on the school website:

<http://www.caraghns.ie/general-policies.html>

Conditions might include (but are not limited to) Asthma, Epilepsy, Coeliac, Allergic Reactions, Diabetes, Mobility Issues.

We still collect used stamps for the Carmelite Missions