



24th September 2020

Dear St. Fintan's NS parents and guardians,

We are approaching the end of September already, almost one month into the new school year! Many changes and challenges remain with the pandemic but having listened to our pupils and school parents and having closely monitored school operations this past month, all our new systems are working well. This is great news. Certainly I speak for all the team in St. Fintan's NS in saying that we are absolutely delighted to have school back up and running and to be able to work with the children in-person again!

Please note the following information for our school community:

- **Parents Association:** Thanks to Christina Ryan (outgoing chairperson) and all members of the outgoing Parents Association committee. The PA hosted a great AGM Zoom meeting last night which was very well attended, with lots of great ideas for supporting the school going forward.
- **School Photography and Communion/ Confirmation:** Well done to all of the boys and girls in 3rd class who made their First Holy Communion last week, delayed since May. Well done also to our former 6th class pupils who had their delayed Confirmation ceremonies the week before last. In line with the Board's policy of minimising outside groups entering the school at the moment, unfortunately we can't currently have the school photographer (www.richardgavin.com) in to take class pictures or individual pictures for parents. However, the photographer assures us that he'd be delighted for parents to contact him directly to make arrangements for photographs through his studio. If enough parents have the photos taken, he'll be able to make a collage class Communion / Confirmation photo for the school too. When safe and possible, the school will also have the photographer in to take pupil and class photos, including for our new junior infant pupils.
- **Homework:** Further information in relation to homework will issue to parents at the start of October. To support pupils' wellbeing and ensure a happy, pressure free return to school with minimal transfer of germs between home and school, it remains the case that for September there is no official homework.
- **School Milk:** There will be no school milk available to pupils this term. This will be revisited early in term 2.
- **Pupil made Christmas Cards:** Later today an Aladdin digital permission slip will be issued to parents seeking consent for the school to release your child's name to the company that makes our pupil Christmas cards annually. This is a requirement of GDPR. Parents will simply need to click a link in an Aladdin message to opt-in on behalf of their child for their child's Christmas artwork to be then made up into Christmas cards which can be bought through the school, closer to the festive

season. Please respond promptly through the Aladdin Connect app when you receive this message. Thanks to those parents who help organise this project too.

- **Digital Learning:** In the coming days, parents will receive some documentation detailing arrangements for digital learning in the school – including online “distance learning”, should the HSE / public health inform us that individuals, pods or classes need to work from home for required COVID-19 reasons. Parents will be asked to “opt-in” to the digital learning packages available for their child. The digital “distance learning” provided if required will then be delivered through a blend of the SEE-SAW app and Microsoft Teams (at the senior end of the school).
- **Some safety / COVID-19 notices:**
 - Parents are asked to please avoid congregating in the yard before, during or after the school day. All of the COVID-19 safety arrangements as communicated since August still apply in our school, pending review by the Board of Management before the October midterm break.
 - Traffic safety: Again, we have unfortunately witnessed some unsafe driving and turning manoeuvres in the vicinity of the school. Also, it is reported that many cars are parked deep into footpaths meaning that children who are walking / scooting may have to go out onto the busy road to pass them. Please park safely. All traffic matters are regularly reported to our local Garda station and we have been told that tickets will be issued by the Gardaí if necessary.
 - Pupils must be in school by 9am. We have noticed many pupils starting to come in later and later. There will be no access in through side doors from 9am so late pupils must present at reception.
 - All St. Fintan’s NS COVID-19 safety systems and recent COVID-19 messages to parents are shown on our school website www.stfintansns.ie along with links to important HSE guidance documentation.
- **And finally, just to say a huge well done to all of the boys and girls in our school** for their great work, positive attitudes and general “can-do” spirit this past month. We know that the changes required of children both in and out of school by this “new-normal” can be challenging at times. We the staff in St. Fintan’s NS have been really impressed with the positivity of our pupils. It’s great to have them back in school!

Best wishes,

Mr. Caulfield, Principal

