



*St. Malachy's Boys' National School,
Anne Street,
Dundalk,
Co. Louth
A91N286
Tel: 042 9338145
Email: office@stmalachysbns.ie
Roll Number: 18504E*

Principal: Mr. K. Farrell

10th March 2021

3rd - 6th Class Return to School – March 15th 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Further to the Government decision and direction from the Department of Education, I am pleased to advise that our school will reopen on Monday 15th March for our 3rd – 6th class children. As you are aware, a large number of measures were put in place when we were last in school to keep everyone in our school community safe. We can take comfort from the results of our recent Covid compliance (SSPS) inspection in December that indicated that all relevant safety protocols were in place – this inspection report can be viewed on our website. Our school will continue to follow the recently updated DES Covid-19 Response Plan and all guidance from the HSA will be adhered to. The situation as regards Covid-19 in the community is obviously ever-changing and as a school we will review all practices and procedures regularly. To achieve the best opportunity for safety for all school users the following practices will continue.

COVID-19 Advice for Parents

Please ensure that pupils do not attend school:

- If they display any symptoms of COVID-19
- If they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel

Further advice can be found in Section 5 of the updated Covid Response Plan attached and on the 'Back to School' section of our website.

Return to School and Pupil Absence

Parents of children returning to school on Monday 15th March should complete the attached '**Return to Education Form**' prior to their return.

A written absence note, must be submitted on return to school following every absence. Extra copies of these forms will be sent home with your child on Monday. Parent's may also wish to contact the school in advance to advise of a child's reason for absence via email: office@stmalachysbns.ie or telephone: 042 9338145.

Morning drop-off and After school pick-up

School begins at 9.05am. The morning 'drop-off' timeslot is between **8.45 – 9.05am**, with no facility to drop the children off any earlier, due to the current restrictions. Parents may drop off their children at any of the following entrances:

- Anne Street gate (keep to Boys' School right hand side footpath)
- Mullholland Avenue gate
- Rear entrance gate (walkway alongside Friary field)

There will be no access to walk through the boys' school yard to the Infants or Girls school. Likewise, boys will not be permitted to walk through the Infants or Girls school yard. We appreciate for some this may be an inconvenience but all measures are taken in the interest of everyone's safety.

It will be necessary to stagger **pick-up times** at home time to avoid people congregating at this busy time. Children can be picked up from the most convenient gate – Anne St., Mulholland Av. or Rear of school gate.

Children will leave school at the following times:

2nd class & older brothers	@2.35
3rd class & older brothers	@ 2.35
4th class & older brothers	@ 2.40
5th class & older brothers	@ 2.40
6th class	@ 2.45

**We encourage parents not to congregate at the school gates, to wear a mask if possible, and to leave promptly after collecting your child to avoid congestion at this busy time.

We ask all parents for their co-operation in not parking or driving into the yellow boxes/lines at any of our gates in the interest of your child's safety.

Face masks: The children are not required to wear face masks, face coverings or gloves in school. There will be a strong emphasis on hand washing and hygiene.

Hand washing: Children will be encouraged to wash and/or sanitize their hands throughout the day. Washing of hands is the single most useful thing we can do in school to prevent the spread of infection. Hand sanitizer units have been placed in every classroom and throughout the school. There is also warm water and soap in every classroom and in the toilets.

We ask that each parent provides their child with a packet of tissues, a packet of anti-bacterial wipes and a small bottle of hand sanitizer. These items should be labelled with the child's name and will belong to the child but will remain in school for daily use.

Each class level is in an individual bubble. The consistent part of the bubble is the pupils. The class bubble remains together for all activities and will not mix with other classes. Each class will have an area of the yard to themselves at break-time and lunch-time.

Uniform: Pupils are asked to wear a fresh uniform every day, if at all possible, to reduce the risk of infection. To make this a little easier for parents we have agreed that for the period in which the school is operating under Covid-19 prevention guidance, all pupils may wear their tracksuit on any day of the week. Parents have the option of alternating between the formal school uniform & school tracksuit or having two school tracksuits.

School Bags: Children should return all of their books in their school bag on Monday 15th March. Schoolbags will then remain in school.

Coats: In bad weather pupils should bring their coat as normal and they can keep them in their schoolbag. Children are encouraged to bring a coat and 'layer-up' in the cold weather as there will be increased 'outside time' daily and classrooms will be well ventilated.

Plastic Zip-wallets: Each pupil has their own zip wallet. This remains in school on their desk. Please ensure your child is equipped with their own pencil, rubber, ruler, crayons, colouring pencils, pritt stick etc. Each should be labelled with your child's name. These items will remain in the child's zip folder and no one else will touch them or use them. No sharing is permitted.

Lunch: Lunchboxes containing healthy lunches should be brought each day in a disposable bag. Unfortunately, no sharing of food/drink will be permitted. Children must be able to open/peel all items in their lunchboxes themselves. All packaging will be kept in the lunchbox for disposal at home. Lunchboxes must be cleaned thoroughly each evening.

School work: Settling children back to school will be especially important for teachers. Time will be taken to assess pupils' needs, and re-teach, revise, and consolidate previous learning before introducing pupils to new topics. Certain aspects of the curriculum will be prioritised initially including SPHE, PE, Language and Mathematics.

Communication: We use the textaparent system (textaparent app can be downloaded to your phone <https://app.textaparent.ie/get/app>), school website: www.stmalachysbns.ie and email to communicate with parents. Please ensure your details are up to date and inform the school of any changes to parents or emergency persons contact details.

Parent appointments: While the school is operating under Covid-19 prevention guidance, parents are asked to remain outside the school grounds at all times to reduce footfall and the potential spread of the virus. Contact with the school will be by phone (042 93 38145) or email: office@stmalachysbns.ie.

Early Collection: In the event that early collection is needed, parents must phone or buzz the school secretary, Arlene from the porch area at the front entrance of the boys' school. Your child will be brought out to meet you and the sign out book must be completed.

Wellbeing Resources: The Department of Education has updated their wellness resources that may be useful to parents and pupils. They can be found online at: gov.ie - [Wellbeing advice and resources during COVID-19 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie)

We look forward to welcoming your son back to school on Monday 15th March. As in Term 1, I am confident that your child/children will settle back in quickly and enjoy the rest of the school year, in spite of the challenges it will present. If you have any concerns, please contact the school on 042 93 38145 or office@stmalachysbns.ie.

Yours faithfully,

Keith Farrell (Principal)