An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

25 August 2020

Dear Principal

I hope that your plans for school re-opening have gone well and that you have found the supports and resources provided so far useful.

Once again, I would like to thank you and your whole school team and community for all the work that you have undertaken to fully re-open our schools.

I have seen some of this work at first-hand and I know the ingenuity and effort that has gone in to your re-opening plans. I am proud of the huge effort that the teams across our schools have made to make this important re-opening happen.

We have updated gov.ie/backtoschool with new materials for parents and for students. These are designed to be age-appropriate and have been developed in consultation with children and young people and parents. I am grateful to everyone who has participated in giving us this feedback and support and I hope you find them useful.

I would be grateful for your support in ensuring that parents receive the following, important information from the Department and the HSE with regard to returning to school. Links to each of these are in the attached document, so that it is as easy as possible for you to send on the relevant items to your school community:

- Video for parents with key information on supporting children to return to school available here and here
- Fliers for parents – these are attached in this email but are also available for download here. The HSE has prepared material on recognising symptoms, which complements the material from the Department on returning to school. This is available here
- Age-appropriate videos for children and young people at different stages. Videos for primary (both junior and senior level) and post-primary students are available here
- Resources in a wide range of languages. Many schools will enjoy a huge diversity among their student and parent community. To support these parents, we have translated guidance for parents at gov.ie/backtoschool.

The Covid-19 World Service project has also consulted with the Department and has used our key messages to produce a range of videos in a variety of languages which your school community may find helpful – please see more at https://nascireland.org/covid-19-world-service

The Department has also produced a series of induction training videos for all school staff at primary and post-primary level.

This series includes further detailed information for Cleaning in schools, SNAs, School Bus Escorts and the new Covid-19 Lead Worker Representative in schools. This

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training will outline the steps that all staff need to take to ensure a safe return to schools for everybody and are all available here

It is also envisaged that further guidance will be issued later this week on the protocols that will underpin the arrangements for dealing with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. I think this will be very helpful and reassuring for all school communities.

Ultimately, the key message is that where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 amongst school staff or pupils, schools will be required to follow the public health instruction of the HSE Public Health.

Finally, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) has developed webinars and resources to support the wellbeing of school communities, which are all available at gov.ie/backtoschool.

The re-opening of schools will require everyone to adjust and get used to new arrangements and routines. This change of culture won't happen overnight and will take a bit of time in the initial re-opening period to get fully established and embedded into the daily operation of our schools.

If you have concerns with regard to your re-opening plans, I encourage you to contact reopeningschools@education.gov.ie. We have been working with schools all around the country to support them to solve some of the challenges they are facing and together have found solutions to many of the issues that arise. Some of the most common issues have now been detailed in the schools sections on gov.ie/backtoschool and you may find that useful.

I'd like to thank you once again for your efforts, and to wish you and all the students a very happy and heathy return to school.

Yours faithfully

Norma Foley TD
Minister for Education

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25 Lúnasa 2020

A Phríomhoide, a chara,

Tá súil agam go bhfuil do phleananna d'athoscailt na scoileanna ag dul ar aghaidh go maith agus gur chabhraigh na tacaíochtaí agus na hacmhainní a cuireadh ar fáil go dtí seo leat.

Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil leatsa, agus le foireann agus pobal uile do scoile, uair amháin eile, as an obair go léir atá déanta agat chun ár scoileanna a athoscailt.

Tá cuid den obair sin feicthe agam féin agus is eol dom an obair dhian agus an tseiftiúlacht a theastaigh chun ullmhú don athoscailt. Táim mórtasach as na foirne scoile ar fad a rinne iarracht thar na bearta chun gur féidir na scoileanna a athoscailt.

Tá ábhair nua do thuismitheoirí agus do dhaltaí curtha suas ar gov.ie/filleadharscoil againn. Tá an t-ábhar oiriúnach d'aoiseanna éagsúla agus cuireadh i dtoll a chéile é i gcomhar le páistí agus daoine óga agus a dtuismitheoirí. Táim buíoch de gach duine a chabhraigh trí aiseolas agus tacaíocht a thabhairt dúinn, agus tá súil agam go mbeidh an t-ábhar seo ina chabhair duit.

Bheinn buíoch díot ach féachaint chuige go bhfaigheann na tuismitheoirí an t-eolas tábhachtach seo a leanas ón Roinn agus ó FSS maidir le hathoscailt na scoileanna. Tá nasc chuig gach ceann díobh seo sa doiciméad faoi iamh, ionas go mbeidh sé éasca duit na míreanna cearta a chur ar aghaidh chuig do phobal scoile.

- Físeán do thuismitheoirí ina bhfuil eolas tábhachtach ar conas cabhrú le páistí filleadh ar an scoil ar fáil anseo agus anseo
- Fógráin do thuismitheoirí -- i gceangal sa ríomhphost seo agus ar fáil chomh maith le híoslódáil anseo. Tá ábhar curtha ar fáil ag FSS ina mínítear conas comharthaí COVID-19 a aithint, a chomhlánóidh an t-eolas ón Roinn i dtaobh filleadh ar an scoil. Tá sé seo ar fáil anseo
- Tá físeáin aoisoiriúnacha ann a oireann do pháistí agus do dhaoine óga ag céimeanna éagsúla. Tá físeáin do dhaltaí bunscoile (sóisearach agus sinsearach) agus do dhaltaí iar-bhunscoile ar fáil anseo
- Acmhainní i rogha mhór teangacha. Tá go leor scoileanna ann a bhfuil éagsúlacht mhór i measc na scoláirí agus na dtuismitheoirí. Tá an treoir do thuismitheoirí i dteangacha éagsúla ar fáil ar gov.ie/filleadharscoil.

Chuaigh tionscadal Covid-19 World Service i gcomhairle leis an Roinn agus d'úsáid siad ár bpríomhtheachtaireachtaí chun raon físeán a sholáthar i dteangacha éagsúla agus is féidir go mbeidh siad úsáideach do phobal do scoile – gheobhaidh tú tuilleadh eolais ag https://nascireland.org/covid-19-world-service

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Tá sraith físeán oiliúna ionduchtaithe curtha ar fáil ag an Roinn d'fhoirne bunscoile agus iar-bhunscoile, ar aon dul le prótacal an Rialtais faoi Fhilleadh ar an Obair go Sábháilte.

Chomh maith le hoiliúint ionduchtaithe a chur ar fáil do gach foireann scoile, tá eolas breise sna físeáin seo faoi ghlanadh na scoileanna agus do chúntóirí riachtanas speisialta, coimhdirí ar bhusanna scoile agus Ionadaithe na nOibrithe Ceannais COVID-19 sna scoileanna. Is post nua é an tIonadaí sin.

Míneofar san oilíúint gach rud is gá don fhoireann a dhéanamh ionas gur féidir le gach duine filleadh ar an scoil go sábháilte agus tá na físeán ar fad ar fáil anseo

Meastar go gcuirfear tuilleadh treorach ar fáil níos déanaí an tseachtain seo i dtaobh na bprótacal a bheidh mar bhonn leis na socruithe faoi conas déileáil le cás amhrasta nó cás deimhnithe COVID-19. Is dóigh liom go gcuirfidh an treoir bhreise seo na pobail scoile uile ar a suaimhneas. Ar deireadh, is é an phríomhtheachtaireacht ná go gcaithfidh na scoileanna cloí le treoracha FSS Sláinte Phoiblí i gcás ina ndeimhnítear go bhfuil COVID-19 ar dhuine sa scoil, ball foirne nó dalta, nó ina meastar go bhfuil.

Tá seimineáir gréasáin agus acmhainní forbartha ag an tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Síceolaíochta Oideachais (NEPS) le tacaíocht a thabhairt do scoileanna chomh fada agus go mbaineann sé le sláinte agus folláine. Tá siad seo ar fad ar fail ag gov.ie/filleadharscoil

Nuair a athosclaítear na scoileanna beidh orainn go léir dul i dtaithí ar shocruithe agus ar ghnásanna nua. Ní thar oíche a dhéanfar é sin; tógfaidh sé tamall orainn na socruithe nua a chur ag obair mar chuid den ghnáthlá scoile.

Má tá aon údar imní agat maidir leis an athoscailt, mholfainn duit ríomhphost a sheoladh chuig reopeningschools@education.gov.ie. Táimid tar éis bheith ag obair le scoileanna ar fud na tíre, ag tacú leo chun réiteach a fháil ar na dúshláin atá rompu agus d'éirigh linn réitigh a fháil ar chuid mhaith de na fadhbanna sin. Tá réitigh ar chuid de na fadhbanna is coitianta leagtha amach anois i roinn na scoileanna de gov.ie/backtoschool agus is féidir go gcabhróidh sé sin leat.

Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil leat uair amháin eile as do chuid iarrachtaí, agus guím gach sonas agus sláinte ort féin agus ar na daltaí agus sibh ag filleadh ar an scoil.

Is mise, le meas

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An tAire Oideachais

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