



Bunscoil Mhuire, O'Brien's Place, Youghal, Co. Cork

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

We have reached Mid-term or the Hallowe'en Break! All houses are frantically finding bits and pieces to make up costumes that the boys and girls can wear to school tomorrow!

We are living in strange times for sure but, we have re-opened our schools and we have managed to keep them open, which is the priority of the State and also a priority of our Board of Management and all the teachers, SNA's and ancillary staff here at Bunscoil Mhuire.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful staff for the co-operation and the dedication they have shown to our school community during the lockdown of the last school year, running the Summer school and the work that was carried out to make sure that everything was in order for our opening this year. It is the goal of our school to stay open and to provide a safe environment for our staff and for the pupils entrusted to our care. For that to be a success we need the help and co-operation of all of our parents and guardians. We owe a huge thank you to our Parents' Association in particular for the part they have played in helping us to return to school by stewarding at Poison Bush Lane for the months of September and October. All of our parent body have been wonderfully supportive and we continue to rely on that support to keep our doors open to receive and educate our pupils. Some of the restrictions required of us by the Department of Education and Skills, the HSE and NPHE have meant a major rethink for all the stakeholders, in how we approach the day to day running of our school. Where there is a will there is a way! The joy on the faces of our pupils as they quickly enter the school gates is a lovely reminder of how important all our roles are in keeping the school open and the safe sanctuary it provides for our children.

Thankfully we have not had any case of COVID-19 to date in Bunscoil Mhuire. We hope it remains this way and we believe full adherence to guidelines for social distancing, hand hygiene and cough etiquette contribute greatly to reducing the spread of the virus. We will continue to educate our pupils on these practices.

I continue to encourage Parents and Guardians not to enter the school grounds, as outlined in recent correspondence, when dropping off your children in the morning. I encourage you not to enter the school grounds without a face mask when you are collecting the Senior and Junior infants in the afternoon. Please ring the office from the front gates of the school, if a child has to be collected from school and they will be sent down to the front gates to meet you. If you are late dropping a child to school, please do likewise.

Following guidelines from the State, it is most important that travel is curtailed and that the proper restrictions and self-isolation rules are rigorously followed. This is in the interest of all of our school community. I also urge you to continue to follow HSE guidelines on the protocol to follow when your child displays any symptoms of COVID-19. From November 2nd you will be asked to complete a declaration on Aladdin Connect before your child returns to school after any illness.

November is usually the month when parents and guardians get to meet their child's teacher. Sadly, as a consequence of the pandemic this practice has to be cancelled. In place of this our teachers have agreed to send home a progress report on each child so that you will have some idea of how your child is getting on in school this term. Phone calls may also be used to communicate with parents and guardians, where there are particular difficulties observed by the child's teacher.

It is important for the mental wellbeing of our children after the lockdown and the closure of our schools, that we introduce into the school curriculum, elements such as yoga and stress relieving programmes too. We are doing this at Bunscoil Mhuire.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone in our school community a happy and a safe Hallowe'en. Keep up the good work at home with the regular cleaning of hands and reduce all social contacts as much as possible so that we can all return safely to Bunscoil Mhuire on Monday the 2nd of November.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Eoghan Rua Ó Néill.