**St Joseph’s National School**

**Milltownpass**

**Co Westmeath**

**Roll No: 16304J Mobile 0871131259 Phone/Fax No: 044-9222512**

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*Principal: Mrs. Pauline O’Hara Deputy Principal: Ms. Emer Bermingham*

2nd September 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome back to the new school year to all our parents and children, old and new. We look forward to working together with you throughout the coming year. I wish to express my thanks for your cooperation in following the new guidelines for dropping off and collecting. It will take us a little while to become accustomed to the new routine but already the children are embracing it.

It was a delight to welcome back all of our pupils after the extended break and with the co-operation of the whole school community we will endeavour to run the school as smoothly as possible under the new guidelines.

**Homework**

For the month of September, there will be no homework given. This is to eliminate the transfer of items from home to school on a daily basis. There will be further updates on Homework at the end of the month.

**Punctuality / Before and After School Supervision**

School starts at 9.10 a.m. every morning. Children arriving after 9.10 a.m. are late. School finishes at 1.50p.m. for Junior and Senior infants. All other classes from 1st to 6th finish at 2.50 p.m.

As previously mentioned, there will be no playing in the school yard in the mornings before school.

Children are permitted to stand on their designated footprints from 9am and the bell will ring at 9.10.

Children who arrive on the school premises before 9.10 a.m. are not supervised by school staff and remain the responsibility of their parents. This is in accordance with our School Insurance policy with Allianz insurance which states the following;

***“The school will open to receive pupils at 9.10 am. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before this time. Classes end each day at 1.50pm for Junior and Senior Infants and 2.50pm for all other classes. Parents who wish to have their children escorted home should make their own arrangements to have them met at the school gate no later than 1.50 pm for Infants and 2.50pm for all other classes as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after children after that time”. Allianz Insurance***

I would request that children make their way **promptly** to the gate or to their car upon dismissal as no playing in the schoolyard is permitted after dismissal.

**Early Leavers / Late Arrivals**

In the interests of safety, children who are leaving school early will not be allowed out of the school building unaccompanied. The person collecting the child will have to ring the office and let us know they are at the gate. The child will be sent to the gate and the teacher or secretary will fill in the “Sign Out” book.

**Parental Permission Form**

Please fill in and return this form as soon as possible

**Absences**

If your child is unwell or misses school for any reason please inform the school by completing the ***Pupil Absence Note***. (***see attached note)*** This is a legal requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

**Communication**

Positive parent/teacher communication plays an important role in your child’s education. Under the current guidelines, parents may not arrive at the school unless by prior appointment.

The school communicates messages to parents by ***text and monthly newsletter and via the school blog, not by email*.** We will continue to send a newsletter to each family monthly. We will also continue to update you via text messages.

Please ensure that the school secretary has the correct mobile number of the contact person for all school messages and emergency contact name and number***.*** If you are concerned about any issue pertaining to your child’s development, make an appointment to speak directly to your child’s teacher. All staff members are committed to promoting good positive relationships with parents and working together with them as true partners in education. As you can imagine the school is a busy place. Unfortunately, we cannot answer the telephone and respond to messages immediately. If you wish to speak with the Principal or a teacher please phone the secretary to arrange a mutually suitable call back time.

**Book Rental**

Thank you to those who have already paid the Book Rental fee of €40. If you have not yet paid, please send the exact money in an envelope clearly marked with your child’s name .Books have already been handed out and will be kept in school.

**Pupil Personal Insurance**

We will be continuing with our Pupil Personal Insurance scheme in conjunction with Allianz Insurance. The cost is €8 per child, which is 24 hour cover during social, domestic and leisure as well as school activities. Please return the exact fee in an envelope labelled with your child’s name by Monday 7th September. This fee is on the basis of a whole school group cover and therefore we require everyone to participate.

**Art/ Photocopying Money**

This money is now due please**, €20 per child with a cap of €50 per family.** Please ensure that **all monies** sent to the school are in an **envelope clearly labelled with your child’s name, class and purpose of money**. No change is given.

**Healthy Lunch Policy and rubbish disposal**

We encourage all children to bring healthy lunches to school. To date we have had wonderful co-operation from parents and pupils in implementing our healthy lunch policy and we sincerely hope that this will continue. We will be asking all children to bring home all items of packaging and leftover food from lunches to dispose of at home.

**G.A.A. Coaching**

G.A.A. coaching has not resumed yet. We are awaiting further information from the coaches.

Yours sincerely

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