



Welcome back...

by Louise and Wendi

Welcome back for the 2020/ 2021 school year. As you probably saw on Facebook and in email correspondence over the summer, we have made a number of improvements for the 2020/21 school year, mostly for health and safety reasons, to help us to safely remain open during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the main upgrades are:

- The installation of under sink water heaters in all bathrooms throughout the school (this is in line with government and WHO guidance and is particularly relevant if there is a possibility that some users may not engage in best practice hand washing technique or duration)

- Upgrades to all of the fire doors within the school, so that each can safely be used as an access door for staff and students

- The purchase and installation of paper hand towel dispensers in all bathrooms (this is in line with WHO guidance not to

use towels or air dryers in order to minimise the spread of the virus)

- The purchase of large quantities of hand sanitiser, cleaning supplies and cleaning machinery

- The purchase of large quantities of PPE for staff (in line with current DES and Public Health guidance)

- The purchase of lockable containers to store cleaning and medical products safely in each classroom

- Purchasing and installing disinfectant stations at every entry/ exit point within the school (as per WHO guidelines)

- The purchase of additional resources to eliminate any sharing of resources across classrooms

- The continue upgrade of the lighting across the school

- The design of one at a time/ one pod at a time usage of certain school areas

- The design and installation of a colour coded cleaning system to signal to other staff when was the last time a shared space was cleaned

The design and implementation of a new photocopier use protocol to reduce

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access to one of the most contaminable spaces in the school

- The installation of an extra door into the playground to allow for a one way system to be utilised in the playground, and to aid a one way system throughout the entire school

- The clear out and painting of the prefab which had been used for storage

- The upgrade to the insulation, flooring and paint work of classroom six

- The design and use of a new home/ school communication system via email to eliminate the need for communication books

- The use of all additional school spaces to facilitate social distancing as much as possible

- Moving the central computer gaming area into the classroom spaces to reduce Pod cross contamination

- The provision of an additional staff room to allow for social distancing at break and lunch times

- The creation of an isolation space if a student or staff member is showing symptoms of Covid-19.



New Faces & A Few Goodbyes...

By Louise

We welcomed back the same classes as before the emergency closure as we had no graduates in June 2020. Conor has moved on to another school. We are delighted to have our students back to the 'new normal' version of Saplings Special School.

We have some new faces in the school this year – 3 new tutors started in September – Clara, Kasha and Róisín. We also welcome Jason back for another year and Claire back from maternity leave. We said goodbye to Cristina, Jocelyn & Jodie over the summer.

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Mary Doyle, the newest member of our Board of Management.

Fundraising...

We had some extra special help with fundraising during the emergency school closure and over the summer

The 'Tour de Tenth's' crew completed a month long cycle challenge around lockdown Kildare and raised an incredible €1160 for our school.

The Kill Ladies GAA team hosted a Zoom quiz and raised an amazing €1233.24.

Elaine Honey Designs made and sold beautiful reusable face masks in Kill Pharmacy which raised €549.75. Sheila Moore also made and sold fabulous reusable face masks in Naas & raised €220.

Caroline and Mary Sheridan made and sold the ever popular Easter chicks and raised €249.00.

Brian Halpin and Justin from Flawless Flooring donated their time and materials to paint and re-floor one of our prefabs. They did a fantastic job in totally revamping the space.

Saplings Special School would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who fundraised, donated and helped our school during the emergency closure & summer holidays.

Covid-19 Reminder:

As per current DES and HSE rules, you must not send your child to school or childcare if your child has:

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- A temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more

- Any other common symptoms of coronavirus - a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath

- Been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus or been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus

You will need to:

- Isolate your child - this means keeping them at home and completely avoiding contact with other people, as much as possible.

- Phone your GP - they will advise you if your child needs a coronavirus test

- Everyone that your child lives with should also restrict their movements, at least until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.

- Treat your child at home for their symptoms. Keep your child at home until they are 48 hours symptom free.

Our Behaviour Analyst

by Louise

We are one of only 13 schools in Ireland to have a full time Behaviour Analyst. Wendi has worked in Saplings since the day it opened, 19 years ago. She has a huge amount of knowledge and expertise in the area of autism and evidence based education. If you have questions/ queries about any of the following please contact Wendi using the details below.



Challenging Behaviours

Self-injurious behaviours

Aggression towards others

Destruction of property

Self-stimulatory behaviours (that interfere with learning)

De-escalation of challenging behaviour

Prevention of challenging behaviour

Any toileting issues

Starting to use an alternative communication system (e.g. PECS, Lamh, Grace App, Proloquo2Go etc)

If you are thinking about changing your child's communication system

Any transitioning issues that you would like some support with

Any upcoming changes in routine that you would like some support with.

Desensitisation issues (e.g. desensitisation to foods/ textures/ sounds etc)

Puberty and self care issues

Safety awareness issues

Social stories (as appropriate)

Visual schedules (as appropriate)

Using school schedules / rule boards in the home environment

Using coping strategies with your child

Any questions about applied behaviour analysis

Any questions about reinforcement

Any questions about positive behaviour support

Any questions about evidence based education

Please contact Wendi by:

Emailing her at wendi@saplings.org

Upcoming Events...

Friday 9th October – Jersey Day in aid of GOAL (*optional participation*)

Friday 23rd October – Halloween Dress Up Day (*optional participation*)

Friday 23rd October – Students finish at 12.30pm for changeover.