



## Scoil Dara

18<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you and your families are keeping well and that you are looking forward to students returning to their school community. The last few months have been challenging for us all and we are writing to you now with information on the challenges that lie ahead, challenges that we will face in a concerted, practical and supportive manner. We have been working hard during the summer months to make sure that our school will be ready to receive staff and students safely and I am writing to you today to provide information and guidance about the roadmap for re-opening Scoil Dara. These plans are guided by documents published by the Department of Education & Skills such as The Covid-19 Response Plan and The Roadmap for the Full Return to School.

Our priority, born of current public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC), is to minimise the risk of the introduction of infection into the school and to manage risk of spread if a case is notified to us by the HSE. The public health advice makes clear that the most critical part of managing the risks of COVID-19 related to schools doing everything practical to avoid introduction of COVID-19. Scoil Dara will adhere to the Department of Education and Skills “Covid-19 Response plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of post-primary schools” and relevant HSE advice during this time.

As a community of shared purpose we look to our management team, our staff, our students and our parents to support the necessary systems and protocols introduced with those very clear goals in mind. Our experience of school life is materially and significantly transformed because of this global pandemic but mindful of the marked adjustments that our community has already made and committed to we are confident that all of us will recognise our responsibility to our own health and wellbeing and to the safety of others within and beyond the community of Scoil Dara.

It is our collective responsibility to follow the health and safety instructions and protocols now in place in Scoil Dara – with the support of the Board of Management. We trust that the parents and guardians of Scoil Dara students will support the dedicated efforts of all our staff to adhere to the safeguarding measures regarding Covid-19. We ask that parents and guardians discuss the information and guidelines laid out in this document in the home and continue to support us in preparing all students for the new normal that we all face.

### **Awareness of Covid-19 Symptoms**

- Please refer to the HSE.ie guidelines regarding the symptoms of Corona virus.
- Any student displaying or reporting any Covid-19 symptoms should not, under any circumstances, attend school.
- Parents/Guardians of students displaying or reporting Covid-19 symptoms in school will be contacted immediately. It is imperative that arrangements are made for the quick and safe collection of ill students from the school.
- In the event that parents/ guardians are unable to promptly collect the ill student, alternative arrangements must be made for the student to go home promptly and safely.
- Students must remain at home for 14 days if they have travelled abroad.
- Parents/Guardians should contact their GP for advice regarding any symptom presentation.

## **Face Coverings/Face Masks**

As the classes in Scoil Dara are in the main smaller than 49m<sup>2</sup> we are not in a position to sustain a physical separation of 2 metres, therefore all students and staff must wear face coverings throughout the day in school.

- Appropriate, re-usable masks with looped ear bands will only be permitted. These should be washed daily in accordance to HSE guidelines (please refer to the HSE Website - <https://www2.hse.ie/>).
- Students will be advised on the correct use of their face coverings / masks to avoid the spread of Covid-19.
- The wearing of visors may be facilitated in consultation with the Principal

## **Other changes that will be implemented this year will include:**

- School uniforms are to be worn by all students each day except for the day students are timetabled for PE. On that day students will wear their PE gear throughout that school day. PE classes will go ahead in line with DES guidelines and students will be advised of these arrangements on their return to school. In line with public health guidelines, we would ask that school uniforms are washed regularly.
- Classrooms and common areas within the school have been reconfigured in line with DES guidelines to maximise physical distancing.
- Base class groups have been designated a base room within a school zone nominated for their year group.
- The reconfiguring of classrooms supports optimum physical distancing
- Seating arrangements within option classes will ensure that students associated by base class remain together.
- A one-way system of student movement within the school building will operate

- The school has established an isolation area and protocols for its use
- A full range of PPE equipment, signage, hand sanitiser etc. have been ordered. Signage will be displayed throughout the school building as a guide and reminder to all of health and safety protocols and practices.
- Students and staff will sanitise their work areas (desks and chairs) upon arrival to and ahead of departure from classrooms. Sanitising wipes will be disposed of safely in bins provided.
- Hand sanitising stations will be placed in all rooms, along corridors and at entrances and exit doors. Students are required to have their own hand sanitiser in their school bags.
- All lockers have been cleared and cleaned, however they will not be accessible for the first few weeks until a safe system of use is put in place whereby students can access them according to designated times, in line with safe and practical guidelines.
- Students should not arrive at school before 8:30 am each day. On arrival to the school grounds, students should proceed directly to their allocated class room. Doors of classrooms will be left open and supervision will be provided in each year group zone from 8:30am until classes begin promptly at 9:00am
- On their return to school all students will receive induction training and guidance in adhering to the COVID-19 safety measures and protocols at Scoil Dara
- Training will also be provided in the use of Office365 (MS Teams/Outlook etc.) to support the blended learning model and the range of skills associated with it.
- A Covid-19 Response Team (staff) is already in place since school closure
- All access to the school (except for students & staff) is by appointment only. We advise that parents/guardians do not endeavour to drop-off forgotten items to the school on behalf of students. In line with current guidelines this service can no longer be facilitated at reception.

- All student appointments (dental, medical, wellbeing...etc.) should be arranged for after school, on Friday afternoon and/or during school holidays where possible. Parents/guardians should not present at the school to sign a student out/in for appointments.
- Only parents/guardians who have been contacted by the office to collect a student who is unwell are permitted to call to the school. Guidelines for the collection of an ill student will be shared with parents/guardians in such instances.
- There will be no canteen in the school this year, therefore students must bring their own lunch and drink each day. This applies to 6<sup>th</sup> Year students also who, due to public health guidelines will not be permitted to leave the school grounds at lunchtime this year.
- Students are requested to utilize re-usable plastic drink bottles (BPA free and max 800ml size). Students should carry a small plastic bag in their school bags as all food and wrapping waste from lunch and snacks must be bagged and brought home. At this time all bins and cleaning services are designated for the safe disposal and management of sanitising wipes and cleaning materials.
- Each student/year group will have a designated lunch area for both morning and main lunch.
- The following amendment to the Code of Behaviour will be formally ratified by the Board of Management: “We expect and look forward to the co-operation of all members of the community of Scoil Dara in complying fully with the Covid-19 measures and protocols that are implemented to ensure a safe and sustained re-opening of our school”

**The following is our Return to School Schedule:**

**Thursday 27th August**

**9am-3:50pm** - Staff Meeting

**10am-1:20pm** - 1st Year Student Induction with Year Head and tutors

**Friday 28th August**

**9am-1:20 pm** - Staff Meetings – students remain at home

**Monday 31st August**

**9am-1:20pm** - Continued 1st Year Induction - timetabled classes

3rd Year Induction with Year Head and tutors

**1:50-3:50pm** - Staff Meetings

**Tuesday 1st September**

**Staff 9am-3:50pm**

**9am - 1:20pm** - 1st Year timetabled classes

6th Year Induction - Year Head and tutors

**1:50-3:50pm** - Staff Meetings

**Wednesday 2nd September**

**Staff 9am-3:50pm**

**9am-1:20pm** - 2nd Year Induction - Year Head and tutors

Transition Year Induction - Co-ordinator and tutors

**1:50-3:50pm** - Staff Meetings

**Thursday 3rd September**

**Staff 9am-3:50pm**

**9am-1:20pm** - 1st Year timetabled classes

5th Year Induction

**1:50-3:50pm** - Staff Meetings

**Friday 4th September**

**Staff 9am-1:20pm**

**9am-1:20pm** -1st year timetabled classes

LCA 1 & 2 - Induction.

**Monday 7th September** : All students return for full day of timetabled classes (9am – 3.50pm)

Kindest regards and best wishes to all.

Rath Dé oraibh go leir,

*David Mc Cormack*

Principal

- **A Return to Work Protocol**, online Covid-19 induction training is currently being developed by the DES which staff will have to complete before the school reopens