



Dear Parent/Guardian,

We sincerely hope that you and your families are keeping well and healthy. Following yesterday evening's announcement from An Taoiseach we are currently in the process of planning for our return to school subject to HSE and the Department of Education and Skills advice and guidance.

6th Year Students will be the first group of students to return on the 1st March. Followed by 5th Years on the 15th of March. 1st, 2nd, 3rd and TY students are all set to return on the 12th April. Each new start date is subject to ongoing review, public health advice and confirmation by Government. Scoil Dara will continue to communicate with you as further information becomes available.

In line with our re-opening and in an attempt to do everything possible as a community to keep our school Covid-19 free, we would like to make you aware of the following information:

- All parents/students must ensure that the return to educational facility form has been completed and submitted before returning to school. This form will be sent to students proceeding each year groups return.
- If your child is displaying any Covid-19 symptoms do not send them to school, contact your GP and seek advice
- If your child is awaiting a Covid-19 test or the results of a test, do not send them to school
- If you or your child have been abroad in the two weeks prior to the return to school do not send your child to school. It is compulsory that they self-isolate for 14 days on return from abroad
- If your child is a close contact of a confirmed case do not send them to school until they have been cleared to return to school after self-isolation for 14 days

On students return to school an updated induction will be delivered to them with regard to the procedures and practices to manage the risks associated with COVID-19. We will revise the measures the school has put in place to prevent COVID-19, provide information regarding what is expected of all of us, the symptoms of COVID-19, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, physical distancing (increased separation and decreased interaction), use of PPE, impact on school activities and what procedures will be followed if there is a suspected case in the school community.

School's Covid-19 Response Plan:



In order for us to continue to maintain and provide a clean, safe learning and teaching environment we have been working hard within the school to implement the COVID – 19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Post Primary Schools. (DES publication 27th July 2020).

The Schools Response Plan is available on our school website.

The following will form part of our Schools' Response Plan:

- COVID-19 Induction programmes for all students and staff.
- Deep Cleaning of the school is ongoing and will be completed prior to the return to school. In addition, all water systems have been flushed to prevent Legionnaire's Disease.
- Daily inspections of school building and utilities to ensure cleanliness.
- Extra cleaning staff to ensure best cleaning practice. Revised cleaning arrangements will allow for regular cleaning of touch points and toilets.
- COVID-19 Signage erected throughout the building and grounds.
- All members of the school community i.e. Students, Teachers, Support & Ancillary Staff will be required to wear Face Coverings similar to those worn in shops or on public transport at ALL times in the school as a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- Each student is required to have an extra clean face-mask with them at all times are also encouraged to carry their own hand sanitiser and small towel or face cloth to dry hands in the bathrooms
- A School Co-ordinator for COVID-19 has been appointed in the school. This person will ensure compliance with statutory obligations and in the event of an outbreak, they will ensure that the school follows the required procedures.
- A room has been designated as a COVID-19 isolation room. Parents will be contacted immediately and should come and collect their child if they are suspected of having COVID-19 symptoms.
- Strict guidance will follow for visitor and parental access to the school building which may be required for essential purposes only. Parents/Guardians should not present to the school building having not contacted the main office beforehand.
- Hand sanitisers are placed at each entrance of the school and at the entrance of each classroom and office.

Classrooms:

Classrooms have being reconfigured to reflect DES guidelines and to maintain 1 metre distance between students in classrooms.

We will have an open-door and open-window policy throughout the school as a preventative measure against COVID-19. Please ensure that your child wears thermal layers underneath their uniform if required.



Lockers:

Students will NOT have access to lockers so as to minimise potential congregations. Staff have been asked to be conscious of this in their class preparations. Students have been encouraged to store their books in a strong 'bag for life' style bag under their assigned desks in their base classrooms.

Students can wear their PE uniform to school on the days they are timetabled for Physical Education as this will eradicate the need to use the changing rooms and afford opportunity for washing of uniforms during the week.

Moving around the school:

We are continuing to use tutor/class-based rooms for the remainder of this year. This is to reduce, as much as possible, interaction between different classes and year groups. Each year group will be based in a different section of the school building.

Each year group have designated toilets for their use only. These will be highlighted again to students upon return.

Designated bins are provided in each classroom for the disposal of PPE.

Lunchtime arrangements:

Each year group has been assigned their own space for breaktime and lunchtime. As has been the case since September all students will be required to move outdoors during these breaks unless due to inclement weather they are instructed not to. Students will from March 1st be required to wear their face-masks at all times while outdoors during breaktime and lunchtime when a distance of 2 meters cannot be maintained between students. Students will be requested to use the first 10 minutes of their breaktime and lunchtime to eat their lunch. This is the only time that students can remove their face-masks during the day. We are conscious that this is a difficult request however it is inline with public health advice and guidance from the HSE. Ball sports or any activities which may enhance the potential spread of Covid 19 will not be permitted during breaktime and lunchtime.

Before and after School arrangements

As has been the practice since August students will not have access to the school building until 8.30am each morning. A large amount of outdoor furniture as well as awnings have been provided for student use during this time. If entering the building between 8.30am and 9.00am students must be seated in their assigned seat in their base class until moving to their first class at 9.00am. These measures are in place to facilitate contact tracing if required. On the finishing of classes at the end of the school day students are to leave the school building through their designated year group entrance/exit. Students must continue



to wear their face-masks at all times while on the school grounds or in the vicinity of the school (ie. the bus collection points) while a two metre distance cannot be maintained between students.

Change to contact details:

It is imperative that the school be able to contact a parent / guardian at all times due to the serious nature of the current pandemic. Please ensure that your details are correct on our system. Please make your child's yearhead aware of any changes to phone numbers, emails and home addresses.

Please be advised that you must make an appointment with the front office via phone.

Thank you to all our dedicated staff, parents/guardians and students for all your help, advice, understanding and support over the past few months. All of us as staff, students and parents/guardians have an obligation to take reasonable care for our own health and safety and that of our community. The cooperation and assistance of all is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19. All of us have a key role to play. We recognise that all of us alike may be nervous and anxious about returning to school. We have put in place additional resources and supports to facilitate a safe return and we will all continue to work together to keep the whole school community safe. We have no doubt that as in August our students will face these testing times with courage, conviction and understanding. Together as a school community we will progress through these difficult times with brighter days ahead.

Regards,

David Mc Cormack, Principal.