



Re-opening our school – Updates from Ms. O' Connor, Principal

Bulletin 4 – Please read this with your child!

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We would like to update you on our plans for returning safely to school this year.

The school officially re-opens for students on Monday August 31st for 1st year students. (Please go to school website for full return schedule). All students will have an induction session to help them get to know their school again, get to know their tutors, teachers and other key staff who will work closely with them over these days.

For induction, students will only need to bring:

- a pen and a copy/refill pad
- a re-usable, cloth mask/face- covering (please note that these must be appropriate for school setting and no scarves or bandanas are allowed).
- a snack will be provided (breakfast bar)
- Please note – the water fountain will not be in use and so students must bring their own water in a **labelled bottle**.

Students will get a tour of the school, meet their new classmates and learn how the school day works and what their subjects are about. They will get information on their new timetables and their school journal which explains how the school runs.

Covid-19 Safety Precautions

We are preparing the school (please re-read previous Bulletins) so we can follow all of the necessary safety procedures as outlined by the Department of Education and the HSE. These include:

1. **Our Code of Behaviour is currently flexible enough to enable us to deal with instances of non-compliance of mask wearing, failure to follow instructions from a member of staff and unacceptable behaviour. To complement this, the following regulations will also apply:**
 - All students must wear a face mask in classes where social distancing of 1 metre is not possible or at the request of teachers.
 - Masks must be worn on the corridor, coming into the school building, while in class and transferring from class to class. A student may only take off mask/visor if out doors and maintains a minimum 2m distance from others.



- Students must not share any items, for example: pens, rulers, calculators, books, water bottles, etc. **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING.**
 - Any student caught spitting or coughing at another member of the school community will face a serious sanction, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.
 - Hand sanitisers should only be used for the purpose intended. Any student caught using the hand sanitisers in an inappropriate manner will face a serious sanction.
 - Social distancing, hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette should be observed by all students. (Good respiratory etiquette means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze.)
 - Where students have an elective subject (e.g. options) they should move quickly into their new class and should be seated with members of their base class cohort, observing as much physical distance as possible.
 - Physical distancing between the teacher and class should be observed.
 - **No student should attend school if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with Covid-19.**
 - **Any student who develops symptoms of Covid-19 at school should bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly.**
 - Any behaviour deemed to be inappropriate or disrespectful with regards to any member of the school community and COVID-19 Guidelines may incur a serious sanction, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.
 - Students who may not be able to wear masks for medical reasons will be considered on a case by case basis.
2. It is **ESSENTIAL** that we have your correct contact details. In the event of a medical concern, we must be able to contact you immediately. Please check your VSWare account (and/or with Orla/Bridget in the school office) to ensure all details are correct. (There is a help guide available on our website to help you set up your VSWare account if you don't have one yet.)
 3. It is also **ESSENTIAL** that you visit the school website and Facebook page for updates, as well as your child checking their emails regularly. We will communicate with you regularly and will be able to alert you if there are any Covid-19 concerns.
 4. Students should **NOT** come to school if they feel unwell / display any of the Covid-19 symptoms (cough, temperature, loss of smell / taste, shortness of breath).
 5. If you have travelled from a country not on the current Green List, your son/daughter must self-isolate for a period of 2 weeks and must not come to school.
 6. We have created 2 Covid Isolation Rooms in case anyone displays symptoms while in school. In such cases, students will be brought to this space where they can safely isolate until they can be collected following consultation with medical practitioners.
 7. All of our rooms have been laid out to ensure social distancing of 1m at a minimum. Depending on certain subjects and the numbers of the students in the



- class, they may be able to sit further apart from each other.
8. Students will have the same allocated seat and will be instructed to clean their seat and desk with disinfectant spray at the end of EACH lesson.
 9. Classroom desks and chairs will be sanitised at least once every day.
 10. Classrooms will have plenty of hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes and hand sanitiser will be positioned throughout the school at all touch-points and on walls of corridors.
 11. Students will be allocated a specific toilet to use and will be only allowed into the toilets in small groups to ensure social distancing.
 12. Students will be split for their morning break to reduce the numbers of students mingling with each other. Students will have their 50-minute lunch in the same area every day and will be allocated a place outside to get fresh air.
 13. We will offer movement breaks and fresh-air breaks throughout the day and will check-in constantly with students to ensure they are doing well and feeling safe.
 14. Parents & Guardians are no longer allowed into any part of the school building without an appointment.
 15. Teachers will not touch student journals for notes etc. **All notes will be on our electronic system (VSWare) which parents have access to.** We encourage you to check this daily to see any positive notes or notes of concern that your son/daughter may have.
 16. All staff & students must adhere to the one system in operation in the school. There is ample signage around the school and everyone will be provided with a map.
 17. All staff will have completed Covid-19 safety training before returning to work.
 18. Students will not have access to their lockers. We will do our best to minimise the number of books students will need to bring to/from school each day and teachers will advise on this in the first 2 weeks of teaching. The introduction of 1 hour classes will see a reduction in the number of subjects taught per day.
 19. Students should not leave any of their belongings in school overnight. Bag racks and coat racks have all been removed. Each student has the sole responsibility for their belongings. **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING.**
 20. There can be no sharing of books or equipment in classrooms.

While these measures have been put in place, we must remember at all times that nothing works better than ensuring students take **personal responsibility** to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. This means ensuring they maintain safe distances from other people, cough/sneeze into their elbow or tissue which is disposed safely, wearing a face-covering when social distancing is not possible, washing hands with hot water and soap and continuing to sanitise their hands.

Thank you for your support in helping us to re-open safely and please continue to reinforce all of these important messages to your son/daughter as often as you can. We realise that many of these measures sound scary and daunting but we will do everything we can to help you through this process. If we continue to work together, we can make



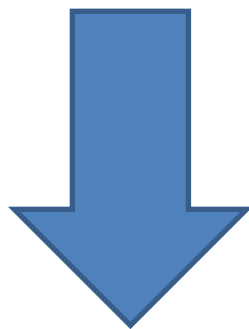
this challenging time that bit easier. Please communicate with us as often as you need – email is the most effective way of getting in touch with us.

Some of the other measures we have taken to safeguard students in the coming months include:

1. Hand sanitiser dispensers & wipes have been installed throughout the school and in all classrooms
2. Cleaning schedules will be increased and all common touch points will be cleaned multiple times per day;
3. Robust procedures are now in place to respond to a suspected case of Covid-19;
4. We have displayed HSE guidelines and Covid-19 Safety Signage across the school (classrooms, toilet blocks, common areas) to educate students on how to 'Stop the Spread' of Covid-19;
5. We have installed markings on the floor at various locations to remind everyone about keeping your distance from others;
6. I have installed hot water in all student bathrooms for the first time in over 20 years.

I ask that all students and parents review the attached ***Student Return to School Safely Induction Form*** which **all** students will need to read and sign. This document provides more detail on the measures that students and their parent / guardian will need to take account of on their return.

**Confused about what you have to do?
Don't be; read the To-Do Checklist I've attached
below.**



Pre-Return to School Checklist

Have you made sure that you've done the following?
Have you explained the following to your son/daughter?



| Task | Detail | Tick when completed |
|------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | I have read the RCS Covid-19 Response Plan (on website from 27/08) | |
| 2 | I have read and accepted the RCS Acceptable Use Policy - website | |
| 3 | I have read and signed the RCS Return to School Form (to follow) | |
| 4 | I have read and signed the Student Return to School Safely Induction Form (to follow) | |
| 5 | I have purchased all necessary books and materials | |
| 6 | I have purchased enough plain colour, no logo face masks for my son/daughter and have explained to my son/daughter that they must wear a mask in school | |
| 9 | I know the school phone number and office email address and the school has my latest contact details. I will answer my phone if the school ring at all times during business hours | |
| 10 | I know that my son/daughter must self-isolate for 14 days if they have returned from a country not on the Green List and must not attend school for that time | |
| 11 | I know that the school is now operating a “Stay At Home If Unwell” policy | |
| 12 | I know that my son/daughter will face a serious sanction for inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour and must follow teachers’ instructions at all times. | |
| 13 | I know I can’t visit the school, unless by appointment and that the gates will be locked. I know that there will be a drop box outside the front door and that one-to-one meetings with teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal will be for emergencies only | |
| 14 | I know that my son/daughter has been allocated a specific toilet in the school | |
| 15 | I know that my son/daughter must have their own water supply | |
| 16 | I will assist the school in the event that my son/daughter must learn from home | |

We still await further guidelines from the DES and I will send a further update before the weekend,

Best Wishes,

Ms. O’ Connor, Principal.