

Dear Parent / Guardian,

I have provided an outline of the organisational and structural adjustments that are ongoing in school to enable us bring pupils back to school safely. This is a broad outline as I do not want to provide information that may be subject to change or clarification in the coming week. For this purpose I am not making any statement around masks other than referring to the most recent guidance on Masks / Face Coverings update to the Covid-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Post Primary Schools (See Summary below) and recognising that it is a challenge for everyone. The Board will consider how this is to be managed and as the finalised information becomes available I will advise. Given the level of underlying conditions in the pupil population I am acutely aware of the concerns parents may have. The return to school represents anxieties for many parents / guardians and some may be hesitant about their child returning to school. If any parent / guardian is considering not returning their child to school we would be grateful if you could let us know.

The staggered return to school is designed to allow us explain to each year group how the school must operate and each person's obligations to co-operate. There will be no scope for reckless behaviour and pupils must respect each other's individual space. We would encourage all parents to actively engage with their child/children and support them in playing their part in stopping the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. Please see links to relevant information.

We have listened to parent/guardian feedback and met with student representatives from Senior and Junior. We have received very interesting insights and questions on a range of issues and will address these. All understand how complex the return will be. All have represented that it is the preference to maintain a uniform policy 5 days per week to avoid unnecessary pressure to purchase 'stylish' clothing and to avoid competition. This is an endorsement of the established Uniform Policy and the school management is happy to implement this and the Board will return to this at the next meeting.

Some of the measures we have had to adopt fly in the face of what we have been trying to achieve for the last 20 years - namely giving the pupils the best facilities- academic, social and recreational- as possible, building their confidence and encouraging their independence. It is heart-breaking to apply these restrictions. But we are in a war against this virus and we must all play our part.

The Board of Management is meeting again on Monday 24th August and we will consider all matters relevant to managing the return to school. We are looking at all opinions and suggestions presented but please be aware that what may seem like a reasonable suggestion from where you are may have knock-on implications here.

I remain committed to reopening the school for all our pupils and staff and will provide further information as we get closer. We are meeting the staff on Wed. 26th, Thurs. 27th and Friday 28th August and many staff have been in school helping arrange the classrooms. We are preparing a video tour of the school which we will post on the website to offer some practical insight into the items outlined below. Online training is now commencing for all school personnel. We will also be learning how we respond in managing symptoms in a member of staff or a pupil which could be indicative of Covid. We need all parents / guardians to reflect on all of the issues I have outlined, to talk with your child / children and discuss any anxieties rationally and help them believe that if we all do our absolute best we have a chance to take back our school. We can overcome the fear if we respect our duty to everyone else and this will be a great test for our pupils to again prove themselves.

If the school ever needed your support and your prayers we need them now.

Paul Fiorentini
Principal