

# Parental/Guardian Bulletin August 25<sup>th</sup> 2020

## We are all in this TOGETHER.

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Dear Parents, Guardians & Students,

We hope this message finds everyone keeping well and looking forward to a return to school. We appreciate that this is a worrying time for everyone and that there are many questions regarding what school life will resemble when we all CBS Roscommon. We are receiving updates daily from the Department of Education about how to best prepare the school building for staff and students. Some information is changing weekly and we want to ensure that everyone is fully informed about the new protocols that are in place before we return. Important information is due from the Department of Education in the coming days so we hope to send detailed information next week for a safe return to school.

Before I go into our plans for reopening I would like to congratulate our senior golfers on their amazing win last week in Cork. CBS Roscommon claimed the **Irish Schools Senior Championship** in Macroom this week. A fantastic achievement and well deserved.

As we finalise our plans for reopening I'd like to share with you some important dates and information relating to our Reopening Plan. The key message to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. We have introduced a range of **essential control measures** to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, students and parents. The Government this week have provided schools with all the necessary online videos and resources to inform the students now to properly perform hand hygiene with hand sanitizers, good cough etiquette, physical distancing protocols and proper wearing of face coverings etc.

It is in all our interests to be vigilant as we work together to control the virus' spread. In this context we urge all parents to do the right thing and be aware of the following symptoms and **do not send** your son to school if he displays them:

- *High temperature*
- *Cough*
- *Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties*
- *Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste symptoms.*

In such circumstances phone your doctor and follow the HSE Guidelines on self-isolation.

Students MAY NOT attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19. In order to assist in contact and tracing we are advising all students to download the COVID-19 app to their phone. The provision of set places in classrooms for each student, particularly in the junior cycle class based rooms, will also assist with this process. **A student in this category may return to school only when his parent or guardian confirms with the Principal that the GP's advice is that he may return safely and he no longer poses a risk.** The Year Heads will liaise with the teachers to ensure that the schoolwork is covered and that the boys do not fall behind. Teachers will be supported to use a variety of strategies including Office 365 to ensure that this is as productive an experience for the student as is possible.

**School commences for all boys at the usual time of 8.55am and finishes at 3.40pm.** Friday school will finish at 1.10pm. To ensure the safety of everyone **the school building will not open until 8.40am** as we cannot ensure social distancing prior to this. Only staff will be admitted to

the building before this to ensure classrooms are ready. All students must have left the school by 3.55pm each day and 1.20pm on Fridays.

**For the moment please be informed that no books will be required on the first day students return to school.** We ask that students do not carry unnecessary subject books or copies as some will be moving throughout the day. To ensure the health and safety of the school community we will begin the school year with **no locker access** for students to avoid congestion but this will be monitored as we move forward. As there will be **no access to lockers** for the foreseeable future teachers will discuss with their students on their return to school their requirements/procedures for bringing in books & copies for class. For the first day simply bring a refill pad/copy and pen. **Reminder to all students there can be NO SHARING of pens; water bottles etc.**

**Afterschool study:** There will be no after school study for the moment. Students must leave the school building within 10 minutes of the last bell, unless by prior agreement with a teacher.

**No canteen or water fountain facilities** will be available, therefore students will be asked to carry their own food and drinks bottle. **Once finished all rubbish etc. must be brought home and not left in school building.**

**A clean and full uniform is required on all days.** As the school is constantly being ventilated the school jacket may be required and this will be carried with the student from class to class when necessary. **A one-way system** is currently being devised and all staff and students will be given an opportunity to familiarise themselves with this new layout when they return. **A map of a one way system** of movement on corridors and between buildings will be given to all students at their respective assembly.

While there will be staggered breaks at small break and at lunch times students are encouraged to bring **packed lunches and to place them in Ziploc bags – no lunch boxes.** Students will be asked to bring home all unused contents and rubbish etc. within the Ziploc bag. Also at this time students will be encouraged as much as possible to go outside. **Additional covered areas and picnic benches have been provided outside for this purpose.**

**School Toilets:** Max occupancy of the toilets is stated on the door. It is extremely important that students adhere to this rule to ensure social distancing. Hand sanitisers are provided at the entrance of all toilet areas. We ask students to use these in a responsible manner.

**Parents are requested not to drive into the school car park for collecting or dropping off their sons.** There will be restricted parking to facilitate recreational areas and cars can pose additional health and safety hazards.

Anyone entering the school to meet with a staff member or a member of the management team must first **make an appointment** with the school secretary. Visitors and parents will not be allowed to go beyond the double blue doors at Reception and into the GP hall. On arrival they must comply with the school's COVID-19 Plan and fill out the contact tracing form.

**Procedure for Signing Out** - Please send in a note in the student journal to the relevant year head in the morning. On arrival in the designated bay in the front carpark, please phone the school office on 090 6626496 or info@cbsroscommon.ie and we will sign your child out.

We are providing **streamlining of entrances and exits** for students. A map of these specific entrances and exits will be given to students at their Induction training assembly. These measures will assist with maintaining social distancing in corridors and assembly areas as well as at entry and exit points.

In addition to maintaining social distancing, all students will be **encouraged to wear face coverings for reasons of hygiene**. The **wearing of masks** is to enhance the health and safety of our school community. All students must wear a plain-coloured mask. Disposable masks may also be worn. To avoid forgetting masks, we advise that all students ensure that their mask is in their schoolbag each night. It is advisable that students have a **spare mask in their schoolbags** at all times. When not being worn, it is advisable that the mask be kept in a plastic Ziploc bag.

**Face coverings/masks act as a barrier to** help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Face masks are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

If you believe that your **son should not** wear a face covering because they are in one of the groups outlined in the HSE guidance (see link below and section titled: Who should not wear one), please contact the school and we will discuss the matter with you.

Information on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings may be found at

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

The school has invested significantly in **Microsoft Office teams** as a virtual learning platform. This has proven to be invaluable during lockdown, and we plan to continue developing this. All students will be provided with further training on it over the coming weeks to ensure that they can continue fully with their coursework regardless of any personal, regional or national changes. Please check with your son that he has his **Notifications** switched on his phone!

**WiFi and MS Teams:** We are trialling the use of school wide WiFi for educational use only. Students are asked to install MS Teams on their phones and may be permitted to use their phone in a class under the express instruction of the teacher. Phone use is strictly not allowed at any other time during the school day.

**Transition Year** - students will have received a letter from the TY coordinator and it available to students on TEAMS. Students looking for letters of indemnification for TY work experience will be given this at their first meeting on Wednesday September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

*Guidance on learning and school programmes for post-primary school leaders and teachers July 2020* places an emphasis on the following for Transition Year students:

“Plan for teaching, learning and assessment in a way that builds on and progresses students’ learning from junior cycle. Given the likelihood that the school closure period will have impacted on students’ learning in variable ways, schools can allocate additional time to teaching the core layer of the programme, with an emphasis on developing students’ literacy and numeracy skills”.

**Hand Sanitisers:** Hand sanitisers are provided at each classroom and at entry points of the building. We ask students to use these in a responsible manner. Wipes will be provided at desks for the wipe down of desks as appropriate and when you are using a different desk. It is extremely important that used wipes are placed in the bins provided.

**Cooperation:** The procedures above have been put in place to ensure we, as a school community, can provide as safe an environment as possible for all - students, staff and the wider community. It is essential that all students abide by these procedures without exception.

**Way to Pay and General Purpose Fee**

School payments must now be paid via Way to Pay. A text message will be sent to you on Wednesday August 26<sup>th</sup> with instructions on how to use our new payments system. Please see the school website for information on the General Purpose Fee.

**Our plan is a work in progress and dependent on all of us staff, students and parents to be responsible and to be aware in order to make it work.** Time has been provided at the beginning of the year to review and amend the plan and any changes will be communicated to you. Please refer to the website for the Return to School dates – Under the tab Information you will see Covid-19 Return to School. This has been sent to all students via their TEAMS and their school email address. Again please check with your son that he has his **Notifications** switched on his phone! Your cooperation and support are greatly appreciated.

**Summary:**

- *Small bottle of Hand sanitiser*
- *Face mask*
- *Anti-viral/Disinfectant wipes*
- *Packet of Tissues*
- *Clean, sealable bag for used masks*
- *Packed lunches and drink*
- *Refill pad/copy book and pen*

Looking forward to seeing everyone back in school and thank you for all your good wishes and support.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Gallagher', written in a cursive style.

Fiona Gallagher

Príomhoíde