



Patrician Presentation Secondary School

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"Our mission is to encourage all pupils to reach their potential in a caring and Christian environment"

August 25th 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As parents and guardians, you will no doubt have many questions about our plans for the return to school. Schools have been asked to plan and prepare for a full re-opening for all pupils and we can assure you that these preparations are progressing at pace in order to ensure that this full reopening will happen without delay. We have developed our 'COVID -19 response plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening of Post Primary Schools'.

The following actions have been taken:

- COVID - 19 Induction Programmes for all staff and pupils
- COVID - 19 Policy Statement adopted by the Board of Management on 14/08/2020, which was sent home to you in previous correspondence.
- COVID - 19 Risk Assessment Policy
- COVID - 19 signage displayed throughout the school premises
- A COVID - 19 Lead Worker Representatives have been appointed to support school management and assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID - 19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Deep Cleaning of the school took place in advance of the new school term

We are also in the process of updating our Code of Behaviour in line with DES guidelines in order to ensure the continued health and safety of all members of our school community. This can only work if everyone adopts a positive attitude, prioritises safety and follows all guidelines strictly to ensure that school is a safe environment for all.

It is important that parents/guardians and pupils understand that the school environment has changed. We hope the following will answer any questions you may have and alleviate any concerns.

As a school community we are dependent upon each other to take collective responsibility to ensure all of our health and wellbeing. We are very much looking forward to welcoming your son/daughter back to the school. We acknowledge that it is an anxious time for parents and students alike and we will do all we can to communicate effectively with you. If you have any queries or concerns, please ring the school.

Q1. Will all students be required to physically attend school?

Yes, all students who are not in the 'High Risk Category' as outlined in the Department Guidelines will be expected to attend school as normal.

Q2. Will students have a full timetable?

Yes. Students will be expected to attend school as normal. (Monday - Friday)

Q3. Will students have an allocated room to minimise movement?

Yes. Base classrooms will be allocated to each base class for the foreseeable future. It may be necessary to reassign base rooms as we monitor the situation during term 1. Students will also be allocated a desk in each base room. Some movement between classes will be required for subjects requiring specialist rooms. E.g. Home Economics, Woodwork, Art, Science etc. and for subjects where levels are different; e.g. Maths, English.

Q4. Will the 1m/2m social distancing rule apply in classrooms?

- Yes. Each base room has been rearranged to ensure that students are at least 1m (shoulder to shoulder) from each other. Students will sit individually in rows facing the teacher.
- Hand sanitising by staff and students is required when entering and exiting rooms.
- Where students need to move about within a classroom to perform activities it will be organised to minimise congregation.
- Where possible, staff will maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m from students.

Q5. Will students be required to wear a school uniform?

Yes. The Reopening Schools Guidelines states that changes to uniform policy are not required. Students are not required to wear freshly laundered clothes each day but we would encourage students to place their name on all items of clothing.

Q6. Are students expected to wear face masks?

Yes. Face masks are now mandatory and it is necessary for your son/daughter to wear a mask for the duration of the school day except in certain situations which will be explained to students at their induction. We will be providing mask breaks for students. In keeping with the school setting, all masks should be plain in colour. If your son/daughter has a medical condition that prohibits him/her from wearing a mask, a medical certificate must be provided in advance of school reopening. The school will be providing two washable masks per student.

Q7. Will students be advised on the correct procedure of using/wearing face masks?

It is essential for those wearing a cloth face covering to understand that the purpose is not to protect themselves but to reduce onward transmission and the benefit is reliant on wearing the covering appropriately. Students will be reminded to cover both their nose and mouth with their mask but it is important that parent(s)/guardian(s) also educate their son/daughter on the correct etiquette.

Q8. What happens if a student arrives at school without a mask or refuses to wear one?

Students without a face mask will be removed from class and placed in the care of his/her parents/guardians until the school management meet with the parents/guardians and are satisfied

that the student will comply with this requirement and no longer poses a risk to the health and safety of himself/herself and the wider school community.

Q9. Will staff wear face coverings?

Yes. All staff are required to wear a face coverings, where 2 metre distancing cannot be maintained.

Q10. Will there be a one - way system in corridors?

Yes. Where feasible, there will be a clearly marked one-way system in operation. This will also include a specific stairwell for moving upstairs and a separate stairwell for coming downstairs along with separate entry and exit doors. Failure to observe this system will be considered a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and a risk to health and safety. This system will be fully explained to students at their induction training which will take place the first day that each year group returns to school.

Q11. Will there be lunch available?

Yes, school lunches will be available the same as last year. Students will be eat their lunch outside in designated areas and on wet days students will be expected to eat their lunch and remain in their classrooms with the exception of Transition Year, Fifth and Sixth Year students who are free to go down the town.

Q12. Will evening study/homework club be available this term?

We will review this after the first few weeks of September. The new cleaning regulations might possibly prohibit this. Our current focus is on reopening the school safely for the duration of the school day.

Q13. Will lockers be available for students?

No, unfortunately lockers have been identified as a point of congestion in schools and therefore lockers will not be available for the foreseeable future. Boxes have been ordered so that students can place their books underneath their designated table in their base rooms.

Q14. Can a parent/guardian drop items into the school for collection by their son/daughter?

No, arrangements for necessary visitors will be restricted to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal (as per guidelines). In order to minimise the risk of COVID-19 Transmission, parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot leave any belongings in the office for collection. That said, please phone the school's office on 052-6131572 if there are any problems.

Q 15 Will subject choices be affected for First Years?

No, fortunately, students will still be able to avail of a three week taster of both Art and Technical Graphics and also between Materials Technology Wood and Home Economics.

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of the COVID -19 virus and to protect the health of staff, students, parents and visitors.

- Hand sanitisers will be available in each classroom, staffroom, and entrance/exit hall.
- Designated bins (foot pedal with lid) will be provided in each classroom throughout the school.

Q 16 How will the signing in/out process operate this year?

- In the infrequent event of a student has to leave school early, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to collect their son at the front gate.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) will not be allowed into the reception area.
- Where possible (scheduled appointments etc.), arrangements should be made in advance of any in-school meetings.

Q 17 What sanitising measures will be implemented?

- A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, students, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.
- Upon entry to the school, it is mandatory for students to have their face mask on before proceeding to sanitise their hands.
- Although sanitiser will be provided, it is recommended that students bring their own pocket size sanitiser and wipes.
- Students will be required to sanitise their hands at the beginning of each lesson and before/after handling materials/tools in specialist rooms.
- Additional sanitising stations are located in different areas around the school
- Water and soap will be available in all toilet facilities.
- Students will be expected to clean their own work areas before they leave the class.

Q 18 Online payments

The school is setting up a mechanism for online payments. Full details will be given soon, once finalised.

Q 19 What will happen at lunch time?

Students will be encouraged to avail of outside space. In the event of there being bad weather, year will remain in their designated classrooms.

Q20 From what time will the school be open in the mornings for students?

The school will be open from 8.45am. If students arrive at this time they will be expected to go via the one-way systems to their designated class rooms. We would ask that students observe physical distancing going to, and coming from school. Special arrangements will be put in place for students getting a bus to school. For any other students who will be arriving early, we will need to know in advance. The school will look into the feasibility of breakfast clubs, homework clubs and study later in September. However, the current focus in preparing for the new school year is from 9.00am-3.50pm, and any subsequent arrangements outside of this will follow HSE guidelines, and will be communicated to parents/guardians in due course.

Reminder to anyone attending school who has travelled abroad:

Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone. It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of 'normal precautions' ("green"), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school staff, parents and children or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible.

In addition to the points above, the Minister for Education and Skills has written to all school principals on August 25th asking us to share advice and guidance with parents. This advice and guidance is on the homepage of our school website www.fethardsecondaryschool.ie and also on our Twitter handle @PPSSFethard.

Thank you for all your support and understanding on the matters above.

Yours faithfully,

Pat Coffey

Pat Coffey

Principal