Dear Parents,

It is so good to be able to write to you all to confirm the return to school for all students. Attached is the calendar for all classes to return and we will be delighted to see all of them back. Whilst we want to maintain as much normality as possible, there are a few adjustments we must make for the health and safety of all students, teachers, and staff.

Firstly, we would like to remind you of the HSE Guidelines and how important they are:

* Wash your hands regularly
* Cough and sneeze into a tissue that you put in the bin or into the crook of your elbow
* Social distance – keeping 2m between everyone where possible
* Wearing a face mask when you can’t stay 2m apart

As a school community, parents, teachers and students, we will all play a part in keeping each other as safe and healthy as possible. We would like to outline some extra procedures which we will be implementing in line with government regulations which are due to the potential impact of covid-19.

1. All students must have a supply of ***face masks*** to ensure a clean mask every day. If students have difficulties with masks, a plastic type visor may be used. These masks must be worn at times when someone cannot keep a distance of 2m outside of the classroom. Masks must be worn on corridors and outside of the classroom.
2. ***We have rearranged our timetable considerably to keep classes as small as possible. Classrooms*** have been arranged so that all students will be a minimum of 1m apart. While government regulations do not require students in a classroom situation to wear a mask in class , we still strongly recommend that they wear a mask as often as possible. Each classroom will have a hand sanitiser but students can bring their own supply if they wish. We would recommend that students clean their hands regularly throughout the day. Students will be assigned a seat in their classroom and a work station/pod in each practical classroom and they will remain in that seat/pod for all classes. There will also be other procedures in some of the practical classes e.g using equipment in the science/woodwork/engineering rooms. All students will be given extensive training in this and other areas.
3. ***As well as in every classroom , Hand sanitisers*** have also been installed at all entrances to the school. It is important for students to clean their hands when they enter and leave the building every day.
4. Students will be provided with a ***stationery pack*** including some copies, pens, pencils etc. It is very important that students **do not** share their stationary with any other students. In Gaelcholáiste Chéitinn, students are encouraged to use their ipads as much as possible and to keep their books for home use.
5. ***Uniform*** is required in the school as normal. However, on the day that a student has PE, they are requested to wear a PE uniform for the day. In Gaelcholáiste Chéitinn, this is the required school PE uniform. In Raheen College, we ask that a plain navy sports pants and a white polo shirt be used as the PE uniform. The regular school jumper can be worn over the PE uniform. We would ask that all uniforms are washed as often as possible. We will not insist on students wearing ties this year as we feel that these are less likely to be washed regularly.
6. Any student who uses ***school transport*** is reminded to follow the school transport guidelines e.g. in relation to wearing face masks, social distancing, coughing and sneezing etiquette, sitting in an assigned seat and sitting in family or class groups. We ask that all students be respectful to all the others using the school transport. We would also require that students who use school transport come straight into school in the morning, do not wait around outside the building and do not go to the local shops. Students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year are not allowed to leave the building at any time including at lunch time.
7. There will be a designated isolation area in each school should a student show any symptoms.
8. We will be implementing protocols around social distancing, one way systems and use of toilets. We expect parental support in stressing the importance of students following these procedures in the school.
9. There will be changes to our code of positive behaviour to reflect the above points and we will advise the school community about these changes once they are ratified by our Board of Management.
10. As always, we are delighted to welcome parents to the school but we must insist that if parents are coming to the school that they follow the following steps:
11. Phone the school in advance of the visit and arrange a time.
12. Make sure you are symptom free and have not been in contact with anyone who has a suspected or confirmed case of covid-19.
13. When you are in the carpark or in the vicinity of the school, phone the school again to let us know that you are outside.
14. Wait for the school secretary to call you back and tell you that it is ok to come into the school.
15. Proceed to the school, wearing a mask and sanitize your hands on entering the building.

We realise that this is a lot of change for the whole school community to acclimatise to. However, we think it is necessary to keep the school open for the year. Since March, we all realise the importance of having the schools open for the wellbeing of all our students. It is important that everyone feels safe and is allowed to participate fully in their learning. With everyone’s co-operation, we will get all the coursework done with all of our students.

We would also recommend that students

* Minimise social contacts outside of school – especially senior students
* Avoid all large gatherings – keep to your own group
* Let us know ***immediately*** if students or parents have any concerns

Most importantly, please **do not send your son/daughter to school if he/she is feeling unwell.**

Please be assured that we will do our very best to look after your sons/daughters to the best of our ability. However, we need your help to do that. As the old Irish proverb says “Ní neart go chur le chéile” – there is no strength without unity. We all have a role to play to make sure we can keep our school open.

As part of the Roadmap to return to school we have had to adapt our opening times from those that we suggested earlier in the Summer. This will facilitate all students to get Covid training as well as catch up with the work done over the lockdown and upskill in ICT training.

Our revised return dates are as follows:

Monday 31st September 1st Years only 9am to 1pm

Tuesday 1st September 6th years only 9am to 1pm

Wednesday 2nd September 6th years

1st years full school day

3rd years only 9am to 1pm

Thursday 3rd September 6th, 3rd and 1st years full school day,

5th years 9am to 1pm

Friday 4th September 6th years, 3rd years, 1st years, 5th years, full school day

2nd years 9am to 1pm

Monday 7th of September All classes full school day except for TY and LCA who come in from 9am to 1pm

Tuesday 8th of September All students back.

Yours sincerely,

John McCarthy