Dear Parent / Guardian,

I hope that you are safe and well. We are looking forward to welcoming our students back to a new school year and giving a very special welcome to our new first years. Our school will continue to adhere to the Department of Education and Skills Covid-19 Response plan in order to restrict the spread of the Covid-19 virus. It is everyone’s responsibility to follow the school instructions and protocols. All students, parents/guardians and teachers are expected to adhere to the measures. We will be operating a high trust model which means that all of us will take responsibility and work together. I would like to draw your attention to our Covid 19 Response Plan on our school website. I have included a **Return to School Declaration** Form which must be completed/signed before your child returns to school, as well as a copy of **School Rules** which must be signed by both student and parents/guardians. Both forms can be signed and brought with students to school on their first day.

**We ask that you discuss each of the following points with your child before they return to school.**

# Code of Behaviour

As stated in our schools Code of Behaviour, “All members of the school community, teachers, students, staff, SNAs, parents and guardians will fully comply with Covid-19 measures and protocols that are implemented for the health and safety of all staff and students” Any Covid aggressive behaviour shall be dealt with through our Code of Behaviour.

# Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols

Hand hygiene is compulsory when entering and exiting the school and on entering and exiting every room. Sanitising dispensers have been placed at each classroom, on the corridors and at other key points throughout the school. Students will have designated seats. Students will be allocated specific toilets to use and will only be allowed into the toilets in small groups to ensure social distancing.

Every student and member of staff must clean their hands before they enter and exit class rooms. There will be no exceptions or excuses.

Students may bring their own hand sanitiser to school every day and this can be used in addition to the school sanitising stations.

All students will clean their desk, chair and any equipment that they have used at the end of every class. Disinfectant wipes will be provided in every classroom and each student must dispose of the wipe in the bins provided.

Students will be advised of any other classroom cleaning arrangements on their return to school. Wherever possible doors and windows will be kept open, to minimise the need for people to repeatedly touch door handles and to maintain air flow.

# Face coverings

All students **must** have their own **face covering (2 per day)**. A different one must be used before and after lunch. Students will not be permitted to enter the school buildings without a face covering.

This must be a proper face mask – students may not use bandanas, snoods or scarves of other such material coverings (no inappropriate patterns/diagrams/logos).

Please ensure your son/daughter knows how to wear, clean and store their mask correctly.

Students will leave classrooms via side doors to get fresh air.

We ask students to wear the reusable/washable masks and to have 2 clean masks for every day of the week (morning and afternoon)

We ask that you speak to your child about the importance of good respiratory etiquette (covering their mouth/nose with a tissue or bent elbow when they sneeze or cough. Appropriate wearing of a mask and the importance of regular hand sanitisation.

# High Risk Students

If you have concerns or worries about your child’s health and their return to school can you please contact the school office@stclarescomprehensive.ie

# Stay at Home if Unwell

All students, parents and guardians have a responsibility to ensure that students who may display any Covid-19 symptoms do not attend school under any circumstances.

If you are contacted by the school due to your son/daughter being sent from class due to illness or suspected symptoms, it is imperative that arrangements are made for the quick and safe removal of the student from the school.

All parents and guardians are advised to have alternative arrangements in place in such an event if you are unable to organise for the student to go home safely.

We will not allow students who are evidently ill to stay on the school premises.

If you are asked to take your child home, you must contact your GP. You must then contact the school to let us know of the GP’s advice. Only then, following the GP’s advice, may your child return to school.

**Covid-19 Isolation Room**

We have a designated Isolation area. Protocols will be followed.

# Contact Details

All student contact details must be accurate and up to date.

In the event of a medical concern we must be able to contact parents and guardians immediately.

Please check your VS Ware account to ensure all details are correct. This includes email addresses.

Contact the school office should you require any changes office@stclarescomprehensive.ie

# Timetables and One Way System

Timetables have been completed in order to minimise the movement of students and staff as much as is possible. In line with DES guidelines, in all classrooms seats will remain facing forward and students will maintain a distance of 1 metre shoulder to shoulder between each other, and will have to maintain a 1-2 metre exclusion zone around all staff members. Students will be assigned a designated seat in each classroom and must remain in that seat unless otherwise instructed by the teacher for the duration of that class.

Students will be shown how to adapt their behaviour in all areas of the school. Staff will enforce this by asking students to step back if they are too close. There will be a one-way system in operation around most of the school and where it is not possible during lesson changes everyone must stay to the left on corridors, in single file and wear a face mask.

# Lockers, Books and Equipment

In line with the DES guidelines students will not be assigned a locker (Lockers have been removed).

Students will limit the number of books and equipment they will bring to school. Teachers will advise students of this upon our return.

Students are asked to bring an A4 pad, pens, and lunchboxes on their first day back to school.

Sharing books, stationery and equipment will not be allowed.

An A4 pad can be used for a number of different subjects as an option for students instead of multiple copies/hardbacks. We advise the use of subject labelled polypockets.

Students are not allowed to leave any belongings in the school overnight.

Any belongings left overnight will be disposed - no exceptions.

# Breaks/Lunchtime

There will be a canteen. Cashless payment systems are in operation..

If students bring their own lunch, lunch boxes must be used and leftovers/rubbish taken home. Students are not allowed to leave their rubbish in the school – bins will be used for the safe disposal of wipes and cleaning materials.

Staggered small and big lunch breaks will be in place for staff and students. Details will be given on the first day.

Students will be in their own designated zones at both small and big break.

Years 4, 5 and 6 are permitted to go up town at lunchtime provided they maintain public health advice on social distancing and that written parental permission is received. This privilege will be kept under review and may be withdrawn at any time.

Nuts and nut products are not permitted in the school. This is for the protection of all students and staff who have or may have nut allergies. High Caffeine energy drinks are not permitted.

# Water Dispensers

These remain disconnected. Students must bring in their own water in a labelled water bottle to school. There will be no sharing of water bottles.

# School Uniform

Full school uniform will be worn to school each day. Students may wear their school jacket in class this year as there will be an open door/window policy in classrooms. Pride in our uniform is pride in our school. Your support with this matter is very important and appreciated.

On PE days students will wear their PE uniform for the duration of the school day. Changing rooms remain closed. Hoodies, football jerseys and shorts/football shorts are not permitted to be worn. It is not an excuse to infringe on the school uniform policy. Please familiarise yourself with your son/daughters timetable and be aware of what day is their PE day.

Bag racks and coat racks will not be in use- Students will carry their jackets.

School uniforms are to be worn by all students every day except on the day (One day only) they are timetabled for PE.

# Appointment Only Access to School Premises

As per government advice, access to the school is **Strictly by Appointment Only.** Visitors to the building **must** phone the school office in advance, make an appointment, and upon arrival wait outside the door to be greeted by a member of staff. Facial coverings must be worn by all visitors to St. Clare’s Comprehensive School.

We will no longer allow parents/guardians drop in equipment. Your son/daughter must take responsibility for ensuring he/she is ready for school.

# Car Parking/Collecting Students

Like any other school year, we ask that appointments are planned outside of school time to reduce disruption to your child’s learning. When this is not possible the following applies;

Parents and guardians are requested not to park the area around the school entrance, drop off area, double yellow lines or drive onto the school grounds. This area must be kept free for the health and safety of all concerned.

We request that where at all possible, students walk or cycle to and from school. Students who walk/cycle/ dropped off by car at school, should go directly to their base classroom. We ask that you drop your son/daughter off as far away from the school entrance as is safe to do so to allow him/her to walk to school. This will greatly assist us to maintain social distancing and manage the flow of students safely into the building. There will be over 550 people entering and exiting the school campus in the morning and evenings therefore your cooperation with this is essential. Students are prohibited from parking in the school grounds – no exceptions.

# School Books

We are proud of our school book scheme and how we manage to keep costs to Parents/

Guardians low. We will be in contact with 1st Year students to arrange collection of school books. Please contact me if you have any financial issues. We do not wish for any child to be disadvantaged because of money.

# Return to school dates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date of Return** | **Year Group** |
| Thursday 26th August 2021 | Staff Training |
| Friday 27th August 2021 | First Years Only |
| Monday 30th August 2021 | First Years & Rang Mhic Dhiarmada |
| Tuesday 31st August 2021 | First Years, Rang Mhic Dhiarmada & 6th Years |
| Wednesday 1st September | First years, Rang Mhic Dhiarmada,  6th & 3rd Years |
| Thursday 2nd September | 1st Years, Rang Mhic Dhiarmada,  5th Years, & 6th Years |
| Friday 3rd September | 6th Years, Tys, & 2nd Years |

\*\*\*Reminder school ends at 1.00pm on Fridays\*\*\*

This incremental return of students is to allow us to make all students fully aware of the school’s protocols regarding Covid procedures. We will all play our part in keeping our community safe.

Our main priority is ensuring that your child attends a safe and supportive learning environment. We are excited about the new school year and look forward to welcoming all students.

I am delighted to be joining the school community and look forward to meeting all members of the community during the next academic year. St Clare’s is an excellent school and I am very proud to be leading a vibrant and happy school community. I am excited to meet students in the coming weeks, in the meantime enjoy the rest of the holidays and stay safe.

Kind regards,

Maeve Kelly

Principal