

## **Return to school Updates:**

Dear parent/guardian,

I hope you and your family are well and enjoying the summer break. We are currently working to put procedures in place so we can safely welcome back our students and teachers as planned from the end of this month. We would like to update you on some recent developments concerning the reopening of our school.

The Roadmap for the full return to school was published on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by the Minister of Education and Skills, Norma Foley.

The school is currently considering the documents provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and has already begun working on implementing the DES recommendations. We are also consulting with our Patron body, Tipperary ETB, to ensure that the school will be able to provide a safe teaching and learning environment for all our students and staff. Our key priority is to ensure that safe systems and procedures are in place to support the best possible learning outcomes. Please see links below:

- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/>
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7a8d5-planning-and-preparing-for-return-to-school-covid-19-response-plan-for-safe-re-opening-of-primary-schools/>

The link below is to Government guidelines that can help with managing wellbeing at this time:

- <https://www.education.ie/covid19/wellbeing/>

The following information may be of help as we begin planning for our return to school. Further detailed updates will follow.

### **Before School:**

Bus transport will run but students will be required to sit in the same seat (beside a sibling or a designated person from the students' class) and wear a mask.

The school is looking at options for car drop off points.

Cycling and walking to and from school are recommended where possible.

### **Timetable:**

All classes next year will be 60 minutes. This will reduce movement in school and the interaction of various groups.

### **Class sizes:**

There will be 6 base groups in 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year. That is an extra base group in each year. Extra class groups will also be created in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year. Guidelines ask for 1 meter distance between students in class.

Social Distancing/hand hygiene/Cough etiquette are still the basic tools to fight Covid 19. Thus, all students will be expected to co-operate fully with these and all guidelines for the running of the school in a safe manner in this difficult time

At present there is no requirement for masks to worn in classes in the guidelines except in certain circumstances. Local decisions may be made in this regard.

The school will provide each student will a small hand sanitiser bottle, tissues and alcohol wipes at the start of the year.

**ICT:**

In the event, that the school returns to blended learning ICT will play an important role. Some form of tablet/laptop/lpad may be necessary for each student in this scenario.

**Lockers:**

Students will not have access to lockers as social distancing cannot be maintained in these spaces. 60 minute classes will reduce the weight of the bag and ways of reducing materials for class further will be explored.

**Breaktimes:**

Students will have to go to designated areas for breaktimes and spend as much time outdoors as possible.

**School Movement:**

Movement between classes will be by means of a one-way system. Students/staff will have to circulate externally so a warm jacket next year will be a must.

**Uniform:**

Tracksuit can be worn on day of PE class and full uniform other days.

**Symptoms:**

The guidelines are clear that students/staff self-isolate at home if any of the symptoms of Covid 19 are experienced. Ultimately the success of schools staying open is down to low community spread and good practices in school. HSE guidelines will be followed.

**Restricted Access:**

Public Health guidelines state that schools must restrict access to building outside of students and staff. Thus, next year I ask that only in very exceptional circumstance should students be collected from school during the day. Please try to make all appointments outside of school time.

**Students in high Risk category:**

Please inform us if your son/daughter will not be returning to school at this time.

Email [pcreedon@tipperaryetb.ie](mailto:pcreedon@tipperaryetb.ie)

**Return Dates:**

There may be some changes to our return dates as all year groups will require full training and induction in relation to our policies and procedures for Covid 19. Online meeting or meeting in school for parents/guardians of each year group will also take place.

**School Building:**

Access is still restricted due to ongoing emergency works.

**Books:**

Will be issued before return to school.

I know many of us are anxious about what lies ahead but with everyone's co-operation and support we will work towards getting all students safely back to school. Please rest assured we will be working hard to make the school as safe as possible and we will do everything in our power to keep things as normal as we can.

Over the next month we will endeavour to keep you informed and update you on our progress at regular intervals through the school website. Updates will be provided on the following planned dates (if other more urgent updates are required you will be notified by text to access the school website):

- Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August
- Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August
- Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August

I wish you and your families well for the coming weeks. I hope you continue to stay safe and well as your children enjoy their break and prepare for the start of term in Coláiste Dún lascaigh.

Peter Creedon  
Principal