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**19th August, 2020 – Return to School Guidelines**

**THIS IS A WORKING DOCUMENT.**

**PLEASE REVISIT THIS PAGE AS IT WILL BE UPDATED REGULARLY.**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you and your loved ones are keeping well in these very challenging times for our entire school community. The world as we know it has changed dramatically since March 12th. We have all had to adapt to a new way of living including social distancing, wearing face coverings and hand sanitising. None of us thought that it would be so long until we saw each other again in person. All our staff members are looking forward to seeing your son/daughter in person very soon.

**We are preparing to open the school as follows, subject to HSE / DES advice:**

* Wednesday 26th August - New Staff Induction
* Thursday 27th August - Staff Development Planning Day for all staff
* Friday 28th August - 1st Year Students & Mentors only (9.00am – 12.20pm)

* Monday 31st August - 5th Year & LCA1 Students only (8.45am – 10.20am)

6th Year & LCA2 Students only (11.00am – 12.20pm)

* Tuesday 1st September – 3rd Year Students only (8.45am – 10.20am)

6th Year & LCA2 Students only (8.45am – 1.00pm)

* Wednesday 2nd September – 2nd Year Students only (8.45am – 10.20am)

6th Year & LCA2 Students only (8.45am – 1.00pm)

* Thursday 3rd September – TY Students only (8.45am – 10.20am)

3rd Year Students only (8.45am – 1.00pm)

6th Year & LCA2 Students only (8.45am – 1.00pm)

1st Year Students only (8.45am – 1.00pm)

* Friday 4th September - All students in school (8.45am – 1.00pm)

**ALL students will attend for FULL SCHOOL DAYS from Monday 7th September onwards.**

Please note to facilitate Covid-19 training of staff and students, we have a phased return to school this year for students. **Students are required to attend** **on the dates and at the times indicated above**. Students will be given their full class timetable upon their return to school.

When staff and students return to school on the dates and times indicated above, an assembly / induction will be delivered with regard to the procedures and practices to manage the risks associated with Covid-19. We will introduce the new measures the school has put in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19. We will provide information regarding what is expected of all of us, the symptoms of Covid-19, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, physical distancing (increased separation and decreased interaction), use of PPE, impact on school activities and what procedures will be followed if there is a suspected case of Covid-19 in the school community.

In order for us to continue to maintain and provide a clean, safe learning and teaching environment, we have been working hard to implement the [Covid-19 Response Plan for safe and sustainable reopening of Post Primary Schools.](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c6657-covid-19-response-plan-covid-19-response-plan-for-safe-re-opening-of-post-primary-schools/) (DES publication 27th July 2020). The schools Response Plan will be published on the school website prior to our return to school.

* **Some students may be unable to return to school due to specific high-risk health conditions. Please contact the Principal by emailing the school at** [**info@hfcs.ie**](mailto:info@hfcs.ie) **if this applies to your son/daughter.**

**The following will form part of our School’s Response Plan:**

* Covid-19 induction programmes for all students and staff.
* Deep cleaning of the school is ongoing and will be completed prior to the start of the school year.
* Daily inspections of school building and utilities.
* Extra cleaning staff will be employed.
* Covid-19 Policy Document to be adopted.
* Covid-19 Risk Assessment Policy prepared and completed (ongoing reviews to take place).
* All members of the school community i.e. Students, Teachers, Support & Ancillary Staff will be required to wear Face Coverings similar to those worn on public transport and in shops at ALL times in the school as a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. This is to comply with DES/HSE guidelines: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/41704-control-measures-covid-19-response-plan-for-safe-reopening-of-post-primary-schools/>
* Two Lead Worker Representatives will be appointed in the school. These people will ensure compliance with statutory obligations.
* There will be a Designated Isolation Room.
* Parental and visitor access to the school is for essential purposes only. All visits to the school must be pre-arranged and parents/guardians/visitors will be met outside. Parents/guardians MUST NOT attend the school without a verified appointment.
* Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities will be provided in all toilets, kitchens and food preparation areas.
* Hand sanitiser will be available in every classroom.
* A Perspex screen will be placed at the front of the teacher’s desk in each classroom.
* Perspex screens will be used in the science laboratories and computer rooms.
* Classrooms are being reconfigured to reflect DES guidelines and to maintain 1 metre distance between students in classrooms.
* Storage cupboards have been removed from many classrooms to allow for additional space.
* Internal doors throughout the school will remain open to improve ventilation.
* To minimise gathering in large groups, lockers will not be available while Covid-19 is in the community.
* Students must bring a lunch box with their name clearly marked on it. All surplus food and rubbish should be placed in the lunch box and brought home.
* Students must bring their property home each evening. Any property left in the school will be binned each evening.
* Students should wear their **OFFICIAL** PE uniform to school on the day they are timetabled for PE. This will eradicate the need to use the changing rooms and afford an opportunity for washing uniforms during the week. **The PE uniform consists of the official school sports T-shirt and navy tracksuit bottoms. Students are not permitted to wear any sports/casual clothing other than the official PE uniform.**
* Students will be placed in Base Classrooms where possible and teachers will move from class to class, so as to reduce the overall movement within the school buildings. Students will have access to specialist rooms as required.
* A one-way system to regulate movement will be in operation for all students and staff.
* The school has purchased a number of sensor/non-touch filtered water stations. Students should bring their own water at the start of the school year until these water stations are installed.
* **Senior students** are permitted to leave the school grounds at lunch time. Students MUST adhere to social distancing and follow the guidelines set out by each establishment/shop in Rathcoole while off the school grounds. This is subject to change.
* **Junior students** who have a Home Pass may go **HOME** at lunch time.
* Students will be allocated a designated room/area for break and lunch times and must remain in these designated areas.

The cooperation and assistance of all members of the school community is absolutely essential to reduce the spread of Covid-19. We all need to work together to keep the whole school community safe. I understand that some students, staff and parents may be anxious about our return to school. I wish to reassure you that the school staff will continue to work hard to ensure that the school is a safe and clean space to which your son/daughter will return.

I wish you and your families continued good health and look forward to seeing our students very soon.

Kind regards,

Brenda Kelly

Principal