



9th September 2020

Covid-19 and Reopening Schools

Dear Parent/Guardian

I write to update you regarding the reopening of St Paul's and the unique challenges that we are experiencing in these Covid-19 times. We are learning on a day by day basis areas of school life and the school organisation that can further enhance the measures we have taken and protect teaching and learning. I thank everybody for your patience and understanding during this time. It is inevitable that these measures will be need to be amended or changed as the school year progresses.

Firstly, I want to thank your son/daughter, the students of St Paul's, for their co-operation and compliance with all the measures we have put in place to minimise the risk of introducing and potentially spreading Covid-19. I wish to thank the staff and you too for your support. I must remind you that there is a collective responsibility on all the school partners, students, staff and parents, to look after each other here in the school, particularly those with serious medical conditions, and to protect those we love at home especially the elderly and vulnerable.

Physical Building

The temporary accommodation due to be installed over the course of the summer has been unavoidably delayed due to issues with the foundations and Covid-19 building restrictions. We will receive the partial handover of some classrooms next week. The remaining will be ready for occupation after the Halloween mid-term. We are leasing the local Scouts Den and Community Centre to provide additional classrooms in the interim and I wish to convey our sincere thanks to the committees of both for facilitating us. The PE Hall has been temporarily repurposed as classrooms and we anticipate with the partial handover of the temporary accommodation it will return to full functionality over the next two weeks.

Class Sizes

We are fortunate that we have deliberately kept our class sizes small as this has enabled us to successfully create base classes for all the relevant years. We are encountering some minor challenges in larger classes where all students cannot be facilitated in the classroom due to social distancing restrictions. We are looking at interim arrangements until the larger classrooms within the temporary accommodation will be ready.

Covid-19 Measures

The measures that are in place in St Paul's are designed to protect each student, their classmates, the staff and particularly the vulnerable and those at home. Students will wear masks anywhere 2m cannot be observed. We have decreased interactions between years by having staggered break and lunch times. We are examining the possibility of introducing staggered finishes to the school day. Students are in base classes where possible and every effort is made to increase ventilation in these rooms. Students will wash or sanitise their hands on entry and exit to and from the school, after

using the toilet, after eating or drinking and on entry to a new classroom. Students will sanitise equipment in specialist rooms after use and their lockers after use. We have provided covered outdoor spaces and picnic benches to facilitate outdoor dining and encourage students to take their masks off in the yard when 2m distancing can be achieved.

Homework, Corrections and Assessments

We need to minimise times opportunities where students copies, assessments and belongings are touched by staff members. Each student will be required to join a Google Classroom for subjects to allow for the safe submission of homework and assignments. Each subject department will decide on the best way to assign homework and assessments and this will be communicated to students by their teachers.

School Journal

The school journal should be brought home every night. It is an integral part of the school communication system and should be used by teachers to pass on information to parents and also for parents to pass information to teachers. Please continue to check the school journal regularly at least once a week. When checking the journal see and sign the weekly comment page, detention record pages, review and target setting pages, that homework is being recorded and remember to complete the absence notes section if required.

Uniform

Students should wear their PE Uniform on PE Days. The PE uniform is a navy tracksuit bottoms and navy polo shirt. For the regular classes on students PE day they must wear a crested school top, namely, their school jumper or PE school hoodie or school jacket.

School Calendar 20-21

The schools 20-21 academic calendar is now on the school website under the Parents/Guardians tab and then Calendar. Please note that the scheduled Open Night and Parent Teacher Meeting are provisional as we await guidance on how these can be conducted in a manner that is Covid compliant and safe for all.

When should I not send my son/daughter to school

Please do not send your son/daughter to school if they have any of the four main symptoms of Covid-19. A reminder again that they are

- High Temperature (fever) over 38 degrees
- A new Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Loss or distortion in taste or smell sensations

For details on what happens if a school member (student or staff) displays symptoms while in school please see the details on the school website under the Covid-19 Supports tab and then School Pathways Document

Access to the School

In line with advice parents are reminded that they cannot enter the school building without prior arrangements with the Principal.

Your son/daughters emotional, physical and social wellbeing is the most important focus for us at the beginning of this school year. In addition we need to monitor and ensure your child and all students are compliant with the schools Covid-19 measures. When these are embedded, with your support and cooperation, teaching and learning can and will flourish. When we are confident that all of these are happening we will introduce extra-curricular and after school activities provided they are safe to do so and in line with guidance from sports governing bodies, the HSE and the Department of Education.

In the interim if you have any questions or concerns please contact us on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Principal