



## Parents' Update – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents(s)/Guardian(s)

I hope this message finds you safe and well. I am writing to update you on the planned reopening of the College at the end of August.

### **Covid 19 Response Plan - Code of Behaviour & Lunchtime Arrangements**

The Board of Management approved the College's Covid 19 Response Plan. The document is available to download from our website. This is a living document and will be updated on a regular basis.

Please note the following changes to the College's Behaviour Code, Attendance Policy & Lunchtime Arrangements.

#### **Changes to the Code of Behaviour**

The health, safety, physical and mental wellbeing of all school staff and students are of absolute importance to the school management. A student who is considered to have deliberately contravened the College's health and safety protocols in relation to Covid 19 and by their actions, placed the welfare of students and/or staff at risk, may be suspended from the College.

#### **Lunchtime Arrangements**

Students will no longer have access to the shops at the front of the College at lunchtime. Students will be advised that they are not to congregate outside the shops before or after school.

#### **Attendance & Punctuality**

Parents are now requested to email their daughter/son's Tutor to inform them of any absence. This email should be sent to the tutor before 8.30a.m. Students who are late for school will not be allowed gain access to their class and will be sent to main reception area for the duration of that class. Students who are consistently late may be suspended from the College.

### **Managing Cases of Covid 19 in a School Setting – HSE Guidelines**

The Department of Education & Skills and the HSE have issued guidance to all schools in relation to the management of Covid 19 in schools. We have posted the HSE guidelines on our website.

Please note the following key points:

- The response to confirmed cases or outbreaks of Covid-19 in the community or in a school is the responsibility of and will be led and managed by **Public Health HSE**. All decisions as to appropriate actions following a confirmed case or outbreak will be made by their teams in the context of a full Public Health Risk Assessment procedure according to the principles set out in the document attached. Any actions to be taken by the school will be communicated directly by Public Health HSE. School management will be informed as and when such actions such as exclusion of children or staff; partial or full closure, are deemed necessary on public health grounds. If the school is not so informed, it has **not been deemed necessary** by Public Health.
- It is inevitable that with confirmed cases of Covid-19 circulating within the community, there will be suspect or confirmed cases amongst pupils and staff attending, or working within, educational facilities.
- However, children will also continue to display symptoms of many other circulating respiratory viruses. It is known that young children often have a persistent cold. A child with a blocked or runny nose, but no fever can attend school but if they require paracetamol or ibuprofen, they must stay at home for 48 hours and parents or guardians should contact the GP to assess whether a test is required.
- If a child displays symptoms which **may** be consistent with Covid-19, the school should contact their parent or guardian and ask them to collect their child as soon as possible. The child should be cared for appropriately by a staff member whilst they are waiting to go home. The isolation space should be cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected when vacated. The staff member who has cared for the child with symptoms during this time does not need to go home unless subsequently advised to by Public Health HSE.
- At this stage, **no further action** by the school is required.
- In particular, schools are asked to note that they should **not** inform other parents or staff members that a pupil or staff member has gone home due to their symptoms. Other pupils or staff do **not** need to be removed from class, including siblings or other household members.
- When the GP of the child or staff member has assessed the symptoms to be consistent with Covid-19 infection, e.g. fever OR a new cough, shortness of breath, deterioration of existing respiratory condition OR symptoms of aguesia or dysgeusia (essentially loss of or changes to the sense of taste) and the person is referred for a test, at this point the person becomes a suspected Covid 19 case and household members including siblings should be withdrawn from school by their parent or guardian.
- Where no evidence of Covid-19 is detected by the test, the child or staff member should remain at home only until he or she is clinically well enough to return to school (unless specifically requested by HSE to do otherwise). In particular, all diarrhoea symptoms need to have been resolved for 48 hours prior to return to school. Household members can return to school immediately following the receipt by the parent or guardian or staff member of a “not detected” result.
- When a case has been confirmed, the Medical Officer of Health and teams will liaise directly with the school and inform them of the confirmed case as necessary and will

undertake a Public Health Risk Assessment to inform any further actions and recommendations.

- Core to this assessment will be the likelihood of onward transmission from the confirmed case and will be informed by an urgent discussion with the school to establish any appropriate isolation for identified staff or pupils. Every school setting is unique and therefore the risks will be unique too, for example they will vary according to whether they are e.g. Special educational needs settings, primary or secondary or boarding schools and other factors specific to each school. This may include the effectiveness of the implementation of recommended HPSC risk mitigation measures and a range of other considerations.
- The definition of close contacts within a school will be variable and determined by a risk assessment that will take account of individual factors within each school or class. **It will not be automatically assumed that a whole class will be deemed as close contacts.** Close contacts will be directly notified by the HSE and advised to restrict their movements and present for testing on day zero and day seven. Close contacts will restrict their movements for 14 days even in the event that Covid 19 is not detected in both of these tests.
- **There is no blanket policy to test entire classes or years.** The testing strategy will be aligned to the Public Health Risk Assessment which may recommend widespread swabbing within a class or school under HSE mass testing procedures.
- In the event of an outbreak, Public Health will determine between a range of possible interventions, from exclusion and testing of a small group or pod of pupils up to and including closure of an affected facility.
- All schools are required to have a summary of key information to assist Public Health in their Public Health Risk Assessment ready to be provided on request.

## Communication & MS Teams Meetings

Many thanks to all parents and students who attended our Teams Meetings last week. We will continue to host these meetings in the coming weeks to provide accurate updates to all parents:

We will be hosting a MS Teams meeting for the parents of all First Year 2020 parents on Tuesday evening at 5.00p.m. This meeting will provide updates on the following:

- Contacting the College – Tutors, Learning Supports, Chaplain & Counsellors
- Managing the Pod System
- A guide to the VS Ware System
- Covid 19 School Response Plan

We will be hosting MS Meetings for the parents of Third Years & LC2 students week commencing Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September.

## Maximising Teaching Opportunities for Third & Sixth Years

We have sought additional allocation from the Department of Education & Skills and we have been able to reduce class sizes for some Third & Sixth Years. We are at present working on the formation of additional Maths & English classes so that all exam students maximise their access to their teachers. Consequently, there will be some realignment of classes and exam students will be informed of this in the coming week.

## School Calendar 2020-21 (First Term)

Please note that a skeleton school calendar is now posted on the College's website and further updates will be provided in the coming weeks. The calendar for the first term is as follows:

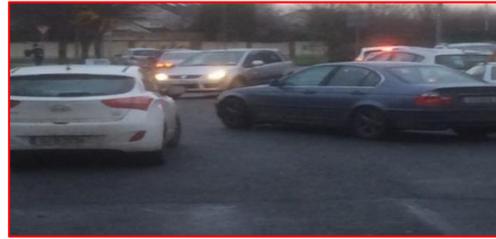
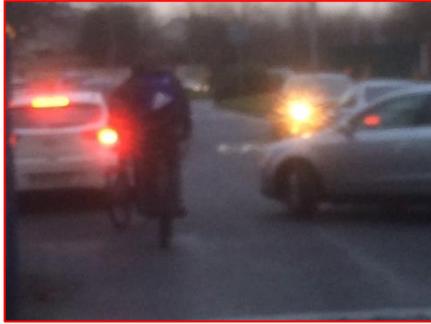
First Term	School Year begins on Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2020
College Closed	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Midterm Break	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> October – Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 (incl.)
College Closed	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
First Term Ends	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020
Christmas Holidays (incl.)	Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2020 – Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2021

## Health & Safety Parking at front of the school

We are reminding all parents not to park on the school grounds or on the slip road at the entrance to the College.

As more students intend to cycle to the College in the coming weeks it is imperative that they are given every opportunity to cycle to and from school safely. The images below were taken sometime ago and represent the challenges facing students as they attempt to cycle out of the main gates of the College.

Parents whose children have a medical condition are permitted to enter the College grounds but must do so with extreme care.



## Cycling to school – Wear a helmet

Can I once again make a special appeal to all students cycling to school to wear a helmet.

### Getting it right

The Active Mobility Advisory Panel's recommendations to the Government include the mandatory use of helmets when cyclists are travelling on roads. While some people are averse to the proposal, The Straits Times shows how a good helmet can help save lives.

#### What to look out for when buying a bicycle helmet

**LIGHTWEIGHT**  
Good-quality helmets can weigh as little as 300g

**VENTILATION OPENINGS**  
Allow good air circulation and heat dissipation

#### The makings of a good helmet

##### First layer: Cap shell

- Made of strong, tough polycarbonate
- Ensures the uniform dispersion of the impact force

##### Second layer: Foam layer

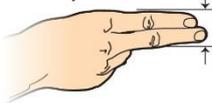
- Made from dense expanded polystyrene
- Effectively absorbs the impact force

##### Third layer: Pad liner

- Dense mesh structure
- Removable

#### Correct way to wear your helmet

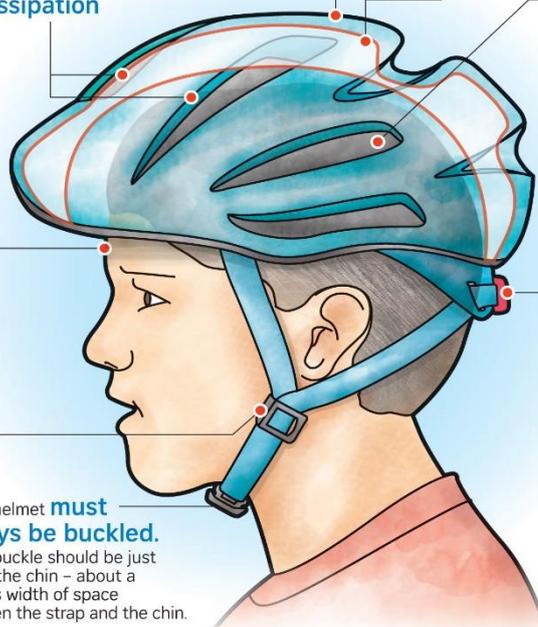
It should sit low on your forehead – about two finger-widths above the eyebrows.



The two side plastic pieces on the straps should fit just below the ears.

• Tighten the chin strap such that you can feel the inside of the helmet pressing down on the top of your head when your jaws are half open.

- The helmet must always be buckled.
- The buckle should be just under the chin – about a finger's width of space between the strap and the chin.



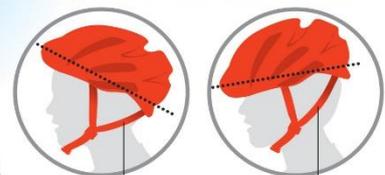
Adjust the locking mechanism for back-of-head fit.



#### FINAL CHECK

- Gently roll the helmet back and forth and sideways while wearing it.
- A useful rule of thumb is that it should not move more than 1.5cm in any direction.

#### Wrong way to wear your helmet



Poor helmet fit and straps are loose

Sources: UNITED STATES CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, WWW.EXPLAINTHATSTUFF.COM STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS