Information on the return to school. 17/08/20

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We have been working hard over the last few months dealing with the end of year issues and preparing for the new school year. We are looking forward to a return to school and we are trying to ensure that we are all safe and we return to happy, productive learning experiences for our students.

We know that we have had many shared experiences since the school closure on March 12th and we are also aware that we all have individual experiences that shape our outlooks for the new school year. In a way we are all transitioning back into school. We realise that from our incoming 1st years to our 6th years we will have work to do to support all students and we are prepared for the challenges ahead.

Please rest assured that we are committed to forging new beginnings. We are open to ideas and suggestions and we will move forward together - ‘Ní neart go cur le chéile’

In an effort to update you on the work to date please read the summary below and I will follow up next week with responses to any queries and a report on further progress.

Yours faithfully,

John Michael Porter

Principal

In engaging with the ‘Roadmap to Reopen Schools’ there are a number of measures we have been considering to maintain safety for all within the parameters of the various guidelines. The information will change in line with any new guidelines – information will be forwarded to you and you are also advised to check out further information on the Department’s website: https://www.education.ie/covid19

Some of the key points to note at this stage are:

1. Changes to return to school dates

To allow for additional staff training we had to amend our return to school schedule:

Tuesday 1st September – 1st years only
Wednesday 2nd – 1st and 6th

Thursday 3rd – 1st/3rd and 6th

Friday 4th – 1st/3rd/5th and 6th

Monday 7th – 1st/2nd/3rd/5th/6th

Tuesday 8th – All students

2. Face coverings

Government advice now insists on students and staff wear face coverings in schools where 2m or 1m social distancing cannot be achieved. This social distancing is difficult to facilitate and therefore face masks will be required. Students should have a clean face mask each day. Please note that wearing a mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic. Some students may not be able to wear masks due to medical conditions and we will follow the HSE/DES advice for those students.

3. Uniforms

Students will be required to wear normal uniform to school. Directions in relation to PE will be given later. As the local uniform and shoe shops have limitations on numbers entering their shop please shop early to avoid last minute queues and delays.

4. Lockers

Lockers will not be available. The teachers are considering how best to reduce the need for books and materials. This may involve leaving books at home and students having a folder for each subject at home – using a refill pad for classroom notes.

5. Canteen

We will have a very limited, if any canteen facility. Further details will follow. Please plan to not have access to hot water, microwaves, school shop and the vending machine – and plan lunches accordingly. We also hope to have some items available for the Breakfast Club.

6. Visiting the school

Where possible we wish to limit the number of people entering the school premises. If you wish to meet Mr. Porter, Ms. Duhig or other staff member you will be required to ring the school office to set up an appointment.

Please help encourage your daughter to be organised to reduce any visits to the school to drop off PE gear/lunches/medication/money/materials/home economics ingredients etc.

7. Students who are ill

It is advised that students with any illness should not attend school until fully recovered.

An isolation room will be provided to accommodate students who feel ill at school – parents will be contacted to bring the student home.
The school should be notified of any Covid 19 case immediately to help with contact tracing.

8. Returning from holidays

Any student who has been abroad in ‘non-green list countries’ should not return to school until 14 days after arriving back in Ireland.

9. Registration

We can’t have our usual registration days this year so please complete the registration process via MIT. If you have any difficulties with the system please email Maria at finance@marysnewross@gmail.com

You may also pay by posting in a cheque or payment will be taken over the phone Wed 19th to Friday 21st 10am – 2pm each day. Phone 426152 or 421637. Please do not visit the school to pay for registration.

You received the details of the costs at the start of the summer and the amounts will be shown on your MIT account.

1st Yr costs are €200 less €50 deposit paid when a place was accepted leaving a balance of €150 to be paid.

10. Evening study

We will survey parents on the interest for study. If we can facilitate parents and students by organising study we will do so.

11. Audit of time arrival

We will survey parents to help determine approximate times when students will arrive at school.

This information will help with creating a plan for social distancing for the mornings.

12. Work Summary

Some of the work completed:

Our Board of Management has a COVID 19 response plan in place.

Hot water installed in all toilet areas.

Space maximised in all classrooms.

Work underway:

Installing hand sanitising stations in classrooms and entrances.
Putting up signage highlighting measures to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Creating capacity for some live streaming of classes.

Having a supply of cleaning products to sanitise surfaces in all classrooms.

**Work under consideration:**

Possible timetable with 1 hour classes instead of 40 minute classes.

One-way systems for movement around the school.

Staggering breaktimes.

Providing two ‘touch free’ water dispensers to refill water bottles.

Blended learning/ Google classroom learning for students who can’t attend school.