



20<sup>th</sup> August, 2020

Dear Parents /Guardians,

I hope this note finds you and your family safe and well. We have been busy over the summer with preparations for our return to school in late August /early September and have put a number of measures in place to keep students and staff safe on their return to school. Please find a summary of these measures and information on student wellbeing in the attached documents.

The Department of Education released their Roadmap for Reopening of Schools on the 27<sup>th</sup> July and attached you will find the Minister of Education's letter to parents. The Covid –19 Response Plan was adopted by the Board of Management on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Useful Links:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c6657-covid-19-response-plan-covid-19-response-plan-for-safe-re-opening-of-post-primary-schools/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/>

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Gerard Cullen

## School Reopening Dates

Due to the need for Staff COVID Training before school reopens this year our planned registration dates have been revised. Registration will take approximately **1 hour** and **students must wear full uniform.**

---

**Sixth Year Students:** Monday 31st August at 9.20am (Prefect meeting at 8.40am)

**Third Year Students:** Monday 31st August at 11.00am

**Second Year Students:** Tuesday 1st September at 9.20am

**Transition Year Students:** Tuesday 1st September at 11.00am

**Fifth Year Students:** Wednesday 2nd September at 11.00am

### First Year Students

**Registration:** Wednesday 2nd September 9.20 – 10.40am

**Induction:** Thursday 3rd September 9.20 – 10 40am

There will be a **full school day for all students on Friday 4th September (8.40am – 2.50pm)**

## **Important Information**

### **Parents:**

- The Department of Education released their Roadmap for Reopening of Schools and attached you will find the Minister of Education's letter to parents.
- Please do not send your daughter to school if she has any symptoms of COVID19 (high temperature, shortness of breath, cough or loss of taste). You should phone your doctor and follow HSE Guidance on self-isolation.
- Students should not be sent to school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for a person with COVID 19 and they should follow HSE advice on restriction of movement
- If you are returning to Ireland from abroad, please ensure you follow Government advice re self-isolation. Your daughter should not return to school until after 14 days from her return to Ireland.
- As we are limiting the number of visitors to the school, parents cannot arrive to the school without an appointment. Every visitor must fill out a contact tracing form on arrival.
- Please ensure your daughter has a number of washable cloth face masks for different days of the week as masks should be washed every day after use.

### **Students:**

- All students will be asked to play their part by washing their hands regularly, observing sneezing and coughing etiquette, keeping physical distance from others and wearing a face mask where 2m distance cannot be observed.
- All students should have a mask and a small pack of tissues in their pencil case. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the school.
- All students must follow teachers' instruction in relation to safety measures concerning COVID 19. Non-compliance has been added as a Serious Offence under the school's Code of Behaviour and may result in suspension.
- Students should notify the Principal (or Deputy Principal) if they develop symptoms while in school.

### **School Management:**

- We have moved from Teacher-based classrooms to Student-based classrooms to minimise the movement of students throughout the day
- Whole Year Groups will be kept together in zones again to minimise movement when changing classes.
- There will a seating plan in all classrooms so each student will have their own desk.
- Classes have been re-configured to allow for 1 meter distance, between students where practicable.
- Additional cleaning arrangements have been put in place
- While this might be a very different year, we have a plan to make things work, and we are relying on everyone (staff, students and parents) to make the plan work for the safety of the school community.

# Returning to School

## **Students should make themselves familiar with the following before returning to school:**

- There will be no vending machines operating however, the canteen will be available for students from Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September and will be operating a socially distanced queue.
- Students and teachers will wear a face mask in the school building at all times.
- All students will need to bring headphones to school each day. Students will not be allowed to share with others.
- Students cannot share belongings and must have all stationery and books each day.
- It is each student's responsibility to keep phones on person and switched off unless given permission by a teacher.
- We will be operating social distancing in classrooms and across the school building. All students will keep left on corridors and use toilets in given zones.
- There will be no lockers in classrooms and each student will have a box underneath their desk for materials.
- Students will keep coats on the back of their chairs throughout the school day.
- All students should also have their own hand sanitiser with them.

## **The following links will help you in preparing for the return to Mount Carmel Secondary School:**

### **Cleaning your hands:**

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

### **Wearing and making face coverings:**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

### **Sustainable and safe reopening of school:**

[file:///C:/Users/teacher/Downloads/83312\\_6c36aaac-22fc-44fd-a4be-88cea4db82d6.pdf](file:///C:/Users/teacher/Downloads/83312_6c36aaac-22fc-44fd-a4be-88cea4db82d6.pdf)

### **Roadmap for the return of schools:**

[file:///C:/Users/teacher/Downloads/82145\\_40753991-21a5-4715-a5a1-0f193df95ade.pdf](file:///C:/Users/teacher/Downloads/82145_40753991-21a5-4715-a5a1-0f193df95ade.pdf)

## Supporting Student Wellbeing on the Return to School 2020

Teach them to recognise body cues that are the early physiological signs of intense feelings



Teach them to identify and label how they are feeling so as to develop their self-awareness and expand their emotional literacy.

Teach them how to rate the intensity of their feelings so as to enable them to develop more self-control.



Empower them by teaching them to identify a range of tools and strategies that they can use to self-regulate and that assist in the healthy expression of emotions.

# Stress & Anxiety

Stress is a part of life, it is a temporary response to feeling under pressure or when faced with change. Anxiety is a response to a vague or unclear sense of danger. Stress and anxiety can affect how we think, feel, and behave. When faced with a real or perceived threat our thoughts tell us we are in danger, and our body gets ready to attack, run away, or freeze.

Helping children and young people learn to manage stress and anxiety is important for their wellbeing. When they are in a stressful or anxiety provoking situation it can be helpful to get them to notice their thoughts, their bodily responses and their behaviour and guide them to find ways to cope.

## Noticing thoughts

Encourage children/young people not to try to push away anxious thoughts as this will make them become stronger. Help them to notice and acknowledge their anxious thoughts as a normal response to stressful situations. Let them know we can all learn to manage our thoughts.



## Noticing bodily responses

Let them know that we can feel stress and anxiety in our body. Some people feel a pain in the tummy, or feel sick, some feel hot in the face or head, some feel the heart beating faster or feel sweaty. Help them to understand that they may experience a mix of these responses or perhaps different ones. Let them know that the response is their body's way of reminding them that they need to calm down.



## Noticing behaviour

Help them to explore their typical response, e.g. do they tend to attack like a shark, use sharp comments like a hedgehog, zoom away like a speeding car or retreat into their shell like a tortoise. Encourage them to notice how they react in certain situations. Remind them that although their reactions are common responses to stress/anxiety they are not always helpful.



## Coping with the stress/anxiety

Support them to develop a menu of healthy coping strategies. Encourage them to try out some of the strategies and help them to evaluate how helpful they were in a given situation.

Choose someone you trust and tell them how you feel

Name your feeling to give it less power  
Use your breath to calm your body  
Practice mindfulness  
Do something kind for yourself  
Develop problem solving skills

Work out your triggers  
Practice positive self-talk  
Practice expressing gratitude  
Distract yourself  
Exercise



Do I attack like a shark?



Do I make sharp comments?



Do I zoom away like a speeding car?



Do I retreat into my own shell?

Developing a Growth Mindset for Post Primary School Students:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfdoJxPjp1k&feature=youtu.be>