

Reopening Presentation College, Carlow

Student and Parent Briefing Document

August 2021

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## **Introduction:**

We welcome every student to Presentation College in August 2021 and assure you of our support and our commitment to your learning in as safe an environment as we can create.

We thank students, staff and parents for ensuring that our school was safe last year, and we appreciate the ongoing efforts made by all in this regard. The whole school community must continue make every effort to ensure that no one is put at risk of COVID-19. We have made huge efforts to ensure that the school building is clean, well ventilated, has plenty of hand sanitiser available and that we are making the best use of the space available to us so that students can continue to learn.

Some of the changes to how we need to observe social distancing and help to prevent COVID-19 from entering the school are significant, and they have resulted in carefully thought-through decisions that are in the best interests of all our health and safety. It is important that students and parents fully familiarise themselves with some of the key COVID-19 safety measures that will operate and that you support and adhere to these changes at all times in order to help protect against the COVID-19 virus. Our COVID-19 Response Plan is available on our school website, and we are guided at all times by public health advice from NPHE (updated from time to time), the Department of Education and Skills and the Joint Managerial Board in the implementation of safety measures to help prevent COVID-19 transmission. The changes we made to the school building in 2020 and to many of our procedures are in keeping with the Department of Education and Skills' Roadmap for Reopening Post Primary Schools and other relevant publications at [www.gov.ie/backtoschool](http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool) We will keep our COVID-19-related policies, practices and procedures under review and will adapt to meet current advice and guidelines from these sources.

It is important to emphasise that we continue to need the full support of students and parents in this regard. Non-cooperation with any of the changes we have implemented is likely to increase the risk of COVID-19 entering the school and spreading rapidly – particularly the more transmissible Delta variant. We appeal to parents and students not to take risks or chances in this regard. At all times err on the side of caution to protect your own health and that of everyone in the school environment. It would only take one case of infection to enter the school and spread rapidly, which could potentially result in whole Year Groups or classes having to remain at home, or school closure. We want to avoid this if at all possible and endeavour to keep everyone safe and to help ensure, insofar as possible, continuity of learning for all students in a safe environment where they can experience a sense of safety, calm and belonging. These are important for students' wellbeing and it is important that teaching and learning are the key focus of the school.

We encourage parents therefore to establish and continue safe and supportive learning habits at home and support those of the school at all times. For the wellbeing and mental health of students it is important that students do not experience severe levels of anxiety or become overly preoccupied with. Students and parents working in supportive partnership with management and staff of Presentation College can help achieve this. Clear communication will be more important than ever.

The safety of students and staff is paramount in order to ensure that learning happens.

**Under NO circumstances should a parent allow their child to attend Presentation College if the student is showing any COVID-type symptom or if he/she has engaged in overseas travel within the last two weeks without adhering to the state's requirements in relation to travel.**

## Guidance for Parents

The Department of Education and Skills has prepared guidance for parents on issues relating to returning to school. The nature of the guidance and the appropriate links are listed below, and we would ask that parents familiarise themselves with this information:

1. Video advice for parents and students at different levels

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/#returning-to-school>

2. Posters/graphics advice for parents

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/#returning-to-school>

3. Multilingual advice for parents

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0cf46-resources-and-materials-for-parentsguardians-and-for-students-on-returning-to-school-multi-lingual/>

4. Communications to Parents regarding School Transport – SEN and Post Primary

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/64a88-school-transport/>

## COVID-19 Symptoms include:

- A fever (high temperature: 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- Cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

The Delta variant of COVID-19 includes some symptoms that could be mistaken for a common cold or hayfever:

- Sore throat
  - Cough
  - Nasal congestion – runny nose, blocked nose, blocked sinus
  - Fever
  - Headache
  - Muscle aches and pains
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Change to sense of taste or smell.
- Information on symptoms can be found at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/symptoms/overview/>
  - During the winter months it is not uncommon for many children to experience colds and flu-like symptoms. **It is essential that parents do not jeopardize the health and safety of others by sending a child to school if they have any such symptom, even if you**

**suspect that it may be a common cold or flu. If your child develops any of the above symptoms during the school day he/she must notify a teacher who will make arrangements with you to collect your child from the school. Please wait in the school carpark in this regard and do not enter the building when you arrive.**

- It is advisable to contact your GP and enquire if a COVID Test may be needed.
- Signs and symptoms of hay fever can also be similar to symptoms of coronavirus. (Hay fever does not cause a high temperature.) Hay fever symptoms also get worse when you are exposed to certain triggers, such as pollen, weeds or grass.
- It can take up to fourteen days for symptoms to show. COVID-19 symptoms can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.
- Getting an early diagnosis from your GP means you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it. A COVID test can be booked online or go to a walk-in centre for a test.  
More information at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/walk-in-test-centres/>
- Arrangements will be made to provide continuity of learning for a student who has to stay at home due to illness. The parent should liaise with the Year Head in this regard.

#### **Overseas Travel:**

- There are risks associated with international travel in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future. If you require a RT-PCR test to travel, you should take into consideration that it may be difficult in some destinations to arrange the required RT-PCR test results for the journey to Ireland within the required 72 hour timeframe. You should be aware that if you contract COVID-19 when abroad, you may face delays in travelling to Ireland. Information on RT-PCR testing requirements for travel to Ireland is available on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) Please refer to HSE advice in relation to travel, as well as <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/75d92-covid-19-travel-advice/> and <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/general-covid-19-travel-advisory/> and <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/> for current information in relation to travelling to and from abroad.

#### **How Coronavirus is Spread:**

- You can get the virus if you come into close contact with someone who has the virus. It is spread through droplets that come from your nose and mouth. For example, from someone who is talking loudly, singing, shouting, coughing or sneezing.
- You can also get the virus from surfaces, for example, when someone who has the virus sneezes. Droplets containing the virus can fall onto surfaces around them. If you touch that surface and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, you could become infected too. Airborne transmission is also possible. Well-ventilated rooms can help reduce this risk somewhat.
- Wearing a face covering can help protect you and help lower the risk of transmission. But you should still do the important things necessary to prevent the spread of the virus.

These include:

- Social / physical distancing (Preferably two metres. One metre where this is not possible),
- Wearing a properly-fitting face mask
- covering coughs and sneezes,

- washing your hands properly and sanitising them regularly,
- not touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean,
- stay outdoors as much as possible,
- ensure rooms are properly ventilated – windows must stay open at all times and CO2 monitors will be used in the school to measure CO2 levels.

**The virus can spread easily in crowded environments.** Avoid crowded places as much as possible. Leave if a particular location becomes overcrowded (e.g. toilet area / First Year locker area) and when keeping two metres apart from other people becomes difficult.

There is a very clear emphasis in our school on **personal responsibility** in managing the risk of coronavirus – every person must ensure he/she is following the correct procedures and guidelines in order to keep safe themselves and help to keep others safe. In order to help prevent COVID-19 from entering the school we must do all we can to **increase space** in and around the building and between each other, and we must also **decrease interactions** with each other. This will probably feel strange and maybe a bit uncomfortable to many of us. Social / physical distancing of two metres is advised where possible. **A minimum of one metre social distancing should be practised at all times by everyone in the school.** This is to protect your health, staff's health and those at home with you – some who may be immuno-compromised, elderly grandparents etc. **We must all minimise the risk of COVID-19 getting into the school, and the risk of it spreading** so that learning can happen and so that we can create together as 'normal' a learning environment as possible.

#### **COVID-19 Response Plan:**

- In advance of students commencing or returning to school in August 2021 every parent should read and discuss with their child the school's COVID-19 Response Plan which is available on our school website [www.presentationcollegearlow.com](http://www.presentationcollegearlow.com) and is updated in line with public health advice. Click on the 'School' tab and scroll down to the 'Policies' section. This is where the COVID-19 Response Plan is located.
- Students should also read the COVID-19 Response Plan. If there is anything unclear in the plan it is important to check with your Year Head, teachers or school management to help you understand what's involved.
- Students and parents must adhere to the actions and guidance detailed in the COVID-19 Response Plan at all times.

#### **Personal Responsibility:**

- We can help to keep the school a safe place for everyone if we all take personal responsibility for ourselves. It is every individual's personal responsibility to wear a face covering, practise social distancing, clean all surfaces before you use them, practise good hand hygiene (hand washing and hand sanitising), coughing into the elbow, sneezing into a tissue and disposing of the tissue in the correct bin etc.
- Do not presume that it is someone else's responsibility to always keep you safe. You must keep yourself safe. You can do this by fully cooperating with all the safety measures in this document and that we will explain to you in school.
- Students are reminded that the cleaning staff, caretaking staff and office staff all play a vital role in the running of the school. It is not their responsibility however to make you safe at all

times. You must do everything you can to stay safe. At all times members of the teaching staff and non-teaching staff must be treated with the utmost respect and students must not engage in any kind of horseplay or other unacceptable behaviour that could pose a risk to any staff member of student.

- If you feel uncomfortable in a social situation with other students if someone is not adhering to the safe guidelines you should encourage and support others to practise safety. If this is not possible or does not work you should report the matter to your Year Head or Dean of Discipline, depending on what the issue is, and remove yourself from an unsafe situation.

### **School Gates and Grounds:**

- Students must not congregate at the school gate, on school grounds or inside the building.
- Face masks must be worn from the time you enter via a school gate.
- Bins must be used for litter.
- Students are encouraged to maximise open space and good ventilation to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. We encourage students to take mild exercise, e.g. walking, on the school grounds during break times and lunch times. Only senior students are permitted beyond the school gates at lunch time only.
- To help maximise space and ease of movement in the school, Transition Year class groups are located in the St. Laurence O'Toole Athletic Club.

### **What to Bring to School:**

- Always bring a supply of suitable face coverings to school, remembering that you may need more than one face covering during the school day. A zip-loc type plastic bag should be brought to store face coverings and the student's name should be clearly labelled on the bag.
- **Students should bring a fresh cleaning cloth in a separate sealed plastic bag to school each day. The bag should be clearly labelled with the student's name.**
- Previously, students would have brought a full school bag of books, copies and materials to school and used lockers for storage of these. Now we must keep everything to a minimum to ensure learning can take place. Teachers will advise on what is required in each subject.
- Students must be in full school uniform as usual, including the school jacket when it is cold.
- Students should also bring a school bag, a small bottle of hand sanitiser for personal use, a copy for each subject, pencil case with pens and other stationery, calculator, iPad (if purchased via Wriggle), water, lunch/snack if required and any other items / equipment as notified by individual teachers.
- Textbooks will be kept to a minimum. Where possible, textbooks should be kept at home and eBooks used. Alternatively, relevant pages of the textbook could be screenshotted for individual use by students in class. It may be possible for the teacher to project the relevant pages of the textbook onto his/her screen. In keeping with our Acceptable Use Policy, a teacher may permit students to access their phones during class to view screenshots, for example, or to work online, while under the teacher's supervision. It is important that students are not carrying overly-heavy schoolbags around with them.
- Only students in First Year and in Transition Year will have access to lockers as they may have a greater need to access textbooks or other materials.

### **What to Do and Where to Go when Entering the School Building:**

- A clean face mask must be worn before entering the school building. The mask must cover the nose, mouth and chin and be properly fitted.
- To avoid congestion at the main school door and the Askea door, students should, in some cases, enter the school building using the external door nearest the general-purpose classroom they will use at 8.50am and 2pm. This will be explained upon students' return.
- School entrances include: the Main Entrance, Askea Entrance, Fire Door Entrance at the end of the blue corridor and the Sixth Year Fire Corridor Entrance.
- Students doing practical subjects at 8.50am or 2pm should enter via the main school door or the Askea door. Then they should wait in the canteen/hall, the Year Group Area or the marquee. This will be explained in further details upon your return to school.
- Only students in First Year and Transition Year may visit their lockers before school starts and then must proceed to their classrooms for 8.50am (or 2pm), or the Area, or the canteen/hall or marquee if they have a practical subject. Students should move promptly to class as soon as the bell rings or just before.
  
- **All students must sanitise their hands immediately upon entering the building** and before proceeding further. This applies each time the student enters the building.
- If hands are soiled please move to a hand-wash basin and wash hands thoroughly. Guidance on proper handwashing is available from the World Health Organisation via this short video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUcm4E>
- Students should wash their hands frequently throughout the school day.
  
- Students must not congregate in one space – some should be in the classroom, some in the Area, some in the canteen/hall and some in the marquee until the bell goes or just before.
- Students' hands should be washed and clean when entering the building. Students must sanitise hands immediately upon entering the building and before proceeding further.
  
- Classrooms must be kept clean and tidy by all students. Under no circumstances may students engage in any type of horseplay or activity involving physical contact with others, or likely to present a risk to their own or others' safety. Any form of misconduct in a classroom posing such a risk will be a breach of the Code of Behaviour and will be handled accordingly.
- Students are not permitted to loiter in the Areas or in toilets. Any congregation of students poses a risk to health and safety, and the risk increases where the distance between students is less than two metres.
- Practise social distancing of at least one metre where possible, and two metres preferably. It may not always be possible to do this when moving on the corridors, so it is important to walk in single file at these times.
- Use the exterior of the building as appropriate. Students leaving classrooms in the First, Second and Third Year areas should do so via the fire doors to the outside, re-entering via the Memorial Garden porch and turn left. However, if students are timetabled at the start of the

next class to be in a room in an area which is directly opposite the area they are in, they should use the internal corridors, observing the one-way system and walking in single file.

- Remember to wear your face covering at all times when you are less than two metres away from others.
- No eating on corridors, in the Areas or in the Computer Room.

### **Movement In and Around the School:**

- External areas will be used as much as possible. A parallel system to the one-way system will operate outdoors. This will be explained to students in more details upon return to school.
- Students must always follow the one-way system in operation in the school, observing and adhering to the COVID-19 signage.
- Students should move without delay and without congregating in any Area, including the toilets, in the building.
- Please walk in single file – not two or more abreast.
- If you see a large gathering / traffic jam of students ahead inside the building you should wait in single file until it eases before moving on. If there is an external door nearby you should consider using that route as an alternative, without causing undue delay in getting to class.
- The blue corridor is a one-way system, except on wet days. Students may enter the Area via the external door at the end of the blue corridor and exit where it joins the main school building. Students wishing to enter the blue corridor should exit via the main school door and enter via the fire door at the end of the blue corridor.
- Students exiting rooms in the First, Second and Third Year areas should do so using the fire doors and turn right. You may re-enter via the Memorial Garden porch, turn left and join the traffic there.
- Where students need to move to an Area opposite the Area they are in at the end of a class, they may do so directly by using the internal corridors.
- Students should move without delay to class when the bell rings. This is important to help avoid any crowding on corridors and in Areas.
- Walk in single file, observing a minimum of one metre physical distancing in open areas where possible.
- Students should not carry unnecessary items or baggage. The aim is to clear space as much as possible at all times.

### **What to Do with Your Jacket:**

- When the weather is cold you should wear your school jacket to and from school and when outside the building during the school day.
- Jackets may be carried by the students from class to class and stored on the back of the students' chairs. If your jacket is dry you can carry it in your school bag if you have room.
- Bag racks will be available in each of the Areas. Students may wish to store their jackets there if they so wish.
- All jackets must have the students' name written clearly on the inside label, using a black permanent marker.
- **Under no circumstances may a student's jacket be borrowed, worn or removed by another student.**



- Jackets may not be worn inside the school building. You are advised to wear layers under your uniform when the weather is cold, bearing in mind that windows will be open to help with ventilation.

#### **Do We have Access to Lockers?:**

- Lockers will only be used by students in First Year and in Transition Year.
- Transition Year lockers are located in the St. Laurence O’Toole building.
- First Year lockers are located in the First Year area.
- Students in these two Year Groups should access their lockers in the morning (before school commences), during lunchtime and at the end of the school day.
- It is essential that social distancing is observed by students when accessing lockers. Any crowding in this area would pose a significant risk of the spread of infection. Therefore, students are advised not to leave it until the last minute to access their lockers. If the Area looks like it is becoming crowded wait outside if possible and return when it is quieter.
- Once you have gathered your belongings from your locker, lock it and move away, preferably outside or on to class. This will allow others access their lockers more safely.
- Lockers will not be available to other Year Groups. They will be sealed and are not to be used. Students in other year groups will require fewer textbooks in hard copy in the school building.

#### **Cleaning Touchpoints:**

- The school will be cleaned once daily by the cleaning staff.
- Students and staff are responsible for cleaning commonly-used touch-points throughout the school day. In particular, school desks and the top surfaces of chairs that may have been touched by others.
- Upon arriving at class, each student’s desk will be sprayed with disinfectant by the teacher. **The student should use their own cleaning cloth to wipe down his/her desk top and edges. Similarly they should wipe down the top area of the chair** likely to have been touched by the previous student.
- Personal responsibility is important at all times. Each student should ensure that the area they are sitting at is clean and disinfected.
- Hands should be washed throughout the school day, and especially after using the toilet, coughing or sneezing. Avoid putting your hands to your face, especially the mouth, nose and eyes.
- Toilets will be cleaned regularly throughout the school day by the cleaning staff.
- Other touch points include taps, door handles, toilet handles, light switches, toilet seats etc. Students should wipe these in advance of touching them, with the materials provided, in the interest of their own safety. Please do not dispose of wipes and paper towels in the toilets – use the bins provided. Toilets will also be checked and cleaned at regular intervals throughout the school day by the cleaning staff.

#### **Being Safe in Class:**

- As outlined above, wipe down the desk and chair areas before you are seated.
- Wear your face covering correctly and avoid touching it during or after class.
- Never shout in class or on the corridors as this increases the risk of infection to others. Singing can only take place under the specific instruction and guidance of the Music teacher.
- Always have your own materials with you. **Students are NOT permitted to share their class materials under any circumstances.**
- Focus on learning. Do not allow your wellbeing and mental health to suffer unduly with any preoccupation, prolonged thoughts or burdensome fear around the COVID-19 virus. Speak to your Year Head, a Guidance Counsellor or Meitheal Leader if you are unduly worried about this. It is normal to have some anxiety and fear about contracting or spreading COVID-19. However, this anxiety and fear must be managed and cannot be allowed to prevent you from being mentally resilient and attentive to your studies. Do not suffer in silence – there is support available if you are unduly worried. It is expected that the first couple of weeks are likely to be the most challenging. Thereafter it is expected that everyone will have settled into a routine and can manage the risks safely.
- Bring your belongings with you. Don't leave anything behind in any room. Check before you leave that you have everything, including your jacket.
- **Classrooms must be kept well ventilated at all times – windows must be open wide during break and lunchtime and open a little throughout class.** Doors should be open if possible. This reduces the risk of spreading the virus by not handling door handles and door frames.
- Teachers will have a seating plan for students. You must adhere to this seating plan for contact-tracing purposes.
- In most instances twenty-two to twenty-four students may sit at desks in classrooms. In some classes, an overflow of students will be required, on a rotational basis, to be seated outside the classroom doors facing the classroom door, where students are visible to the teacher. Teachers may, where possible, prepare handouts for these students in advance since it is unlikely that they will be able to view the whiteboard. Teachers have the option to use the video function on Microsoft Teams to allow students outside to view the lesson and whiteboard (and if necessary, to listen using their ear pods).

### Toilets:

- Try to use the toilets early in the day and during break times, but avoid toilets if they are crowded.
- Adhere to the signage which indicates the maximum occupancy of the toilet block areas. No more than three students are allowed in most areas, and fewer in some. You may have to queue outside.
- Toilets will be cleaned regularly throughout the school day by the clearing staff.
- Try not to interrupt class to ask to visit the toilet, if at all possible, so that movement in the school can be kept to a minimum. If a teacher gives you permission to go to the toilet, he/she will initial, date and time a sticky label for you. You must wear this label on your jumper until you return from the toilet, at which point you must dispose of it in the bin.
- Do not loiter or wait in the toilet block areas. Leave as quickly as possible. Toilet areas are not for socialising.

### **The Building:**

- The changes made to the building last year continue in 2021-2022.
- New rooms were created by partitioning areas and changing the use of some spaces.
- The stage was removed and that space has been changed to a Music Room.
- Room 21 is now a classroom.
- The Library has been partitioned to make two classroom spaces, L1 and L2.
- The upstairs gym has been partitioned to make two classroom spaces, G1 and G2.
- The blue corridor is now one-way. Students should enter via the fire exit doors from the exterior of the building and exit where the blue corridor meets the main building near the school entrance. In order to access the blue corridor from inside the building students and staff will exit by the main school door, turn right and enter the corridor via the fire doors, as outlined above.
- The school is again leasing the St. Laurence O’Toole Athletic building in Askea. Transition Year students will use this building as their base, although they will have use of the main school building for some option classes and for lunch times.
- Satellite staffrooms were created in Rooms 10 and Room 14 and in the student changing rooms by the gym. Staff will have a base in one of the three staff spaces in order to facilitate adequate social distancing among staff.
- COVID-19 signage is displayed throughout the building.
- Floor markings have been included in all rooms to indicate the correct positioning of desks.
- More hand sanitising stations have been fixed throughout the building.
- Good use is made of the external areas of the school. A marquee has been set up for multi-purpose use. Fifth and Sixth Year students may use this area in which to have their break or lunch once not crowded.
- The Computer Room has undergone alterations and other subjects will take place here also.
- Isolation Rooms have been designated for any student who is unwell and is awaiting collection by a parent. It is important that students and parents alike follow the correct procedures below for dealing with a student who is unwell and awaiting collection. The Isolation Rooms are: The Sports Hall Entrance Office, The Piano Room in the First Year Area and the History/Geography Store in the Sixth Year Area. The Isolation Room at the Sports Hall Entrance is the primary Isolation Room to which students will be accompanied if unwell.
- The canteen will continue to operate but social distancing must be adhered to in an orderly queueing system. Per-orders will be taken before 8.50am.
- Arrangements will be made for the TY students to have break in the St. Laurence O’Toole building, and they may return to the school building for lunch if they so wish.
- The Book Shop will continue to operate, and physical distancing must be observed when queueing.
- Additional single desks and chairs have been purchased, and more are on order.
- Lap trays have been purchased and will be hung in classrooms for use by students who may need to sit outside the classroom in the overflow area.
- COVID-19 Response Kits will be installed in the Areas and in the Sports Hall.
- Disinfectant spray, hand sanitisers and other requirements will be made available in all classrooms.

### **Students with Special Educational Needs, Medical Needs or Additional Needs:**

- All members of the school community must be treated with the utmost respect, in keeping with our school ethos.
- Students who may have special educational needs, emotional needs, medical needs or other additional needs may need additional care and support. We urge all students to fully respect and support fellow-students with such needs.
- It is important that parents notify the Year Head if a child has any such additional, special, emotional or medical needs. This is to help us provide for the safety of the student.
- In exceptional circumstances a small number of students with such needs may be granted an exemption from the wearing of a face mask and will wear a protective face shield / visor instead. Such situations must be discussed with the Principal by the parent in advance of the student commencing or returning to school, and an exemption may only be granted upon the prior approval of the Principal. A medical note may be required by the Principal.

### P.E.

- All students will continue to do P.E. as part of the curriculum. P.E. is essential for the wellbeing of students, and promotes both physical and mental health.
- Changing rooms will be out-of-bounds for students.
- The P.E. uniform may be worn to and from school only on the day that the student is timetabled for P.E. Students will be permitted to remain in their P.E. uniform for the duration of that particular school day only. This may also assist parents in the regular washing and drying of school uniforms.
- Most P.E. activities are advised to be of low to medium intensity. This is to help prevent excessive respiratory exhalations and thus reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- Some P.E. activities will take place outdoors where possible in order to minimise risk.
- Students who are wearing the P.E. uniform on a day when they do not have P.E. will be sent home to change into the correct uniform (see letter sent to parents from the Principal).

### Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities:

- For the moment, based on advice given to the school, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities will be paused. This will allow staff and students settle back into the normal rhythm of school in a timely manner. It is expected that there will, at some point, be a phased return to extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. However, contact sports are discouraged for the moment. Social distancing will need to be observed, insofar as possible, and considered in advance of any extra-curricular activity commencing.

### What To Do if I feel Unwell In School:

- **If you have a cough or COVID-type symptom in the morning you should stay at home with your parents' knowledge and be supervised.** It is advisable for your parent to contact your GP and to adhere to any advice given by the GP.
- If you feel unwell during the school day you may need to go home. If you have any COVID-type symptom e.g. a high temperature, cough, sore throat, runny nose, blocked nose,

breathing difficulty, headache, fever, shivers, loss of taste/smell it is important that you are collected from the school. In order to do this, **you must NOT contact your parent directly.**

- If you feel unwell during class, tell your teacher.
- The teacher will contact a Deputy Principal who will accompany you (with your bag/books etc.) to the Isolation Room, observing the procedure detailed in the COVID-19 Response Plan.
- An external route to the Isolation Room should be followed, where possible, and a distance of two metres observed between the teacher and student.
- If you develop symptoms during a break time, tell a corridor supervisor and go to the Isolation Room with your belongings. Arrangements will be made for your collection.
- The main Isolation Room is the Sports Hall Entrance Office.
- The teacher will inform Ms. Gillespie (or Mr Carley/Mr Murray if Ms Gillespie is not available) your illness. Ms Gillespie will contact your parent to arrange your collection from the school. Ms Gillespie will enter the details on VShare.
- If Ms Gillespie (or Mr Carley/Mr Murray) is unavailable, the teacher will take you to your Year Head to call home (and he/she will enter details on VShare).
- Students and teachers should keep their face coverings on and remain two metres from each other and the teacher, Deputy Principal / Principal / Year Head (where relevant).
  
- When a parent arrives to collect the student, he/she must call the school from their phone and inform the secretary that he/she is outside waiting in the car. A parent must not enter the school building. If a parent does not have access to a phone he/she may contact the secretary via the intercom on the exterior wall of the building.
- The secretary will arrange for the student to leave the building at that point.
  
- If a student sustains an injury during the school day, he/she should go to the school office staff who will arrange for a First Aid teacher to see him/her. The First Aid teacher will inform Ms Gillespie (or Mr Carley / Mr Murray if Ms Gillespie is not available) who will arrange with the parent to collect the student. The student will be required to wait on a chair near the main school door – not in an Isolation Room.
- A First Aid (non-emergency) situation arising during a break/lunch time or before or after school necessitates that the student go to the main staffroom to request the help of a First Aider.
- If a medical emergency arises during class it may not be appropriate to send a student to the school office. The teacher will judge whether to call 999/112 immediately (depending on the gravity of the situation) or to send for help to a First Aid teacher or the school office who will arrange same.

#### **Parents Visiting the School:**

- Parents may only enter the school by prior appointment with a member of school management or staff, except where they are briefly dropping off a forgotten item for a child.
- A drop-off point will be made available inside the Wheelchair Accessible door. If a student has forgotten lunch/other item a parent should clearly label the lunch container (or other item) with the child's name and place it at the drop-off point.
- **Any items left at the drop-off point should be sanitised by the parent in advance to avoid the risk of spreading potential infection.**

- When dropping off an item the parent will need to sign the Sign-In sheet outside the school office. **Parents should communicate with office staff via the intercom system only** rather than face-to-face, and only if necessary. The intercom is situated on the exterior wall outside the school office.
- Parents may not enter the building for any other reason and without a prior appointment.
- When a parent is meeting a member of staff or management by appointment he/she must complete the Contact Tracing Log provided and return it to the relevant teacher/member of management.
- A parent who is collecting a sick child from the school, following contact from the school, should call the school office to notify the secretary that they are outside. They should wait in their car and not enter the school building. The secretary will locate the student and guide him/her to the outside.
- Entry through the front door of the school is by the power-assisted door only. Exit is through the main door – the release button is on the left side of the door. Do not enter via the main door.

### **Face Coverings:**

- Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.
- In August 2020 the Department of Education and Skills directed that teachers and secondary school students wear face coverings, similar to those worn in shops or on public transport, when a physical distance of two metres cannot be maintained (based on *Interim Recommendations for the Use of Face Coverings in School Settings*).
- All face coverings must be appropriate, in good taste and suitable for school use. A face covering deemed by the Principal to be inappropriate will not be acceptable and a student in this situation may purchase a face covering from Ms. O'Connor in the bookshop or from Ms. Gillespie in her office.
- Face coverings should be reusable and washed every day. A supply of disposable face coverings will, however, also be available to purchase in the school in the event that a student arrives to school without a face covering.
- A student may wish to bring more than one face covering to school so that it can be changed throughout the day.
- Information on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings is available at this link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>
- All students should wash or sanitise their hands before putting on or adjusting a face covering.
- Face coverings should be stored in individually labelled sealed plastic bags when not in use.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.
- Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

- In Presentation College additional disposable face coverings and school-crested cloth face coverings are available to purchase for €3 by students, teachers, and non-teaching staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day. These may be purchased from Ms. O'Connor in the bookshop or from Ms. Gillespie at her office.
- A face visor is less effective in helping prevent the spread of droplets, and are not intended for general use by students. There are very limited exemptions to wearing a face mask/face covering and a very small number of students may be permitted to wear a face visor, usually upon medical certification supplied to the Principal, meeting the criteria required. A student's parent needs to discuss any exemption request with the Principal in advance of the reopening of the school.
- A student may wear a face covering and a visor if he/she wishes to do so.
- Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home and contact your GP if symptomatic.

### **Homework:**

- Teachers will continue to assign, check and assess homework. You may continue to do your homework as you have done previously (e.g. in your copy / A4 paper / workbook). However, instead of your teacher handling your copy you should take a screenshot of your homework and have it on your device (iPad / phone) so that the teacher can check it in class if required.
- Teachers may request that you submit your homework online through SchoolWise. Screenshots of work done should be sent to your teacher on SchoolWise using the Assignments tab. Don't post your work on the Activity Feed, since this allows all students to see your work.
- If you are unsure about any aspect of using SchoolWise or Microsoft Teams please ask your Computer Studies Teacher or Ms. McHugh.
- While it is hoped that the school will continue as normal for the full school year, we must be prepared for a sudden closure also. In this event, you must be fully prepared to engage in online learning where possible. Therefore, make sure that you keep your Microsoft Office log-in details safe and secure so that you can log into your school account at any time. Make sure that you can access your school email, Microsoft Teams and SchoolWise and don't hesitate to ask if you are unsure about anything in this regard.
- Lost or forgotten log-in details should be reported to Ms. Lowry who will reset your account so that you can log in with a new password.

### **Break times:**

- Some of your break times may be staggered (i.e. some students will have break fifteen minutes before others and will therefore return to class fifteen minutes earlier than others). This is done to help prevent any Area from becoming crowded. Your full co-operation with this arrangement is important for everyone's safety. First Years and Sixth Years will have break at 10.50 to 11.05am. Other students have break from 11.30am – 11.45am.
- If you begin break at 10.50am, be aware that there may be an overflow of students from some classes sitting in the Areas. They are attending class, so it is important that noise is kept to a minimum and you do not disturb them.

- You may bring a snack with you to school in your schoolbag, and it may be possible to purchase items in the school canteen if the queuing system allows at least one metre between each student.
- You may use the toilet at break times but it is important to avoid being in a crowded environment. Don't delay in the toilet area.
- You may talk to your friends during break times but it is important to practise social distancing of at least one metre. Try to stay outdoors at break times if possible. Remember that face coverings should be worn where it is not possible to be two metres away from someone else.
- There should be no physical contact between students at any time, including break times. This includes hugging, kissing, handshaking etc.
- Morning break: It is best to have your morning break (10.50 or 11.30am) outside if possible. You may wish to remain seated in the canteen if there is space. If there is an empty classroom in your Area you can also go there, but do not disturb any classes around you. You may wish to take some light exercise by going for a walk in the open air. You must not however leave the school grounds during break time. Being in the open air, or in a well-ventilated room, is safer than being in a crowded area. Students must exercise personal responsibility in this regard. Some students may choose to go to the marquee and should not cause any disturbance to classes that are still in session.
- Do not delay in moving to class in order to ensure that crowds do not build up in any area. Remember to bin your litter in the appropriate bins before you leave the base room, canteen, corridor or outside area.

Lunch time: Spaces where you can eat and socialise at lunch time:

First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Transition Year	Fifth Year	Sixth Year
Lunch Hall, Rooms 20, 21, G1 or G2.	Lunch Hall, Rooms 15, 16, 17.	Rooms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.	SLOT	Marquee, Rooms 22, 36, 37, 38, 39.	Marquee, Rooms 6, 8, 9, 11, 12.

### **My Wellbeing:**

- Everyone's wellbeing matters – this includes the wellbeing of students, staff (including non-teaching staff), parents and visitors to the school.
- Key ingredients to staying well include eating a healthy diet, staying hydrated, taking regular exercise (preferably in the open air), sleeping well (about eight hours per night), taking rest, doing things that you enjoy, socialising with one or more friends (need to practise social distancing now), keeping your mind stimulated and ready to learn, and minimising screen time.
- Your physical health and wellbeing affects your mental health and wellbeing. If you don't drink enough water and don't eat a healthy diet it is more likely that you will feel tired, anxious and less able to cope with the challenges of life. You can help yourself therefore by minding your physical health through a healthy diet, regular outdoor exercise, staying hydrated and having proper sleep and relaxation. Even going for a short walk outdoors at break and lunch time can



help clear your mind and provide fresh oxygen to your brain and body. This will help you feel better, less tired and more focused on your learning.

- All digital devices should be shut down and removed from students' bedrooms at least one hour, but preferably two hours, before bed-time. This includes iPads, smartphones, Xboxes etc. This is to help prepare the brain for natural rest and sleep which is undisturbed and of adequate quality.
- Everyone needs to experience a sense of safety and belonging. All students are equally valued in Presentation College. An enormous amount of work has been done over the summer to help create a safe learning environment for students. Despite the many restrictions which all students, parents and staff must adhere to, we know that these are there to protect us. It is still possible to meet and talk with our friends and classmates but we need to be mindful now that this is done in a safe way that doesn't pose a risk to anyone.
- A certain amount of discomfort and anxiety about school is normal given the changes introduced due to COVID-19. Do not let that anxiety get out of control. Keep your mind focused on positive thoughts, positive people and the importance of your learning which will open many good pathways for you in the future.
- Resilience and hope are very important for your wellbeing. Even if you are having a bad day, remember that you have the ability within you to bounce back and make a fresh start the next day. You can try to build a habit of positive thinking every day. Be thankful for all that is good in your life, even if it feels difficult to see the good at times. Try to begin and end each day with hopeful thoughts – it might help to list all the good people and good things in your life that you appreciate, and things that give you hope. If you find that your mind is dwelling a lot on COVID-19 try to train your mind to think of these good people, good things and things that give you hope. Remember that even though it is difficult for us all to deal with the challenges of COVID-19, by working together we can keep each other safe. Scientists around the world are working together to develop vaccines for COVID-19, so we look forward to a time when the virus will be controlled, and we will be at far less risk. Until then we must all play our part to stay safe and keep one another safe.
- Always protect your mental health by expressing any ongoing worries and anxieties. There are plenty of people here to support you if you feel you are struggling to manage your mental health or wellbeing e.g. your Year Head, a Guidance Counsellor, Meitheal Leader or other member of staff or management that you get on well with.