



Coláiste Muire Réalt na Mara

Crosshaven

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Principal: Ms. A. Doherty

Return to school 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

I hope you are all well and enjoyed the summer as much as is possible given our Covid 19 restrictions.

I think it's fair to say that all of us will approach the re-opening of school with a mix of emotions. There will be the joy of re-connecting with friends and colleagues in person and of getting into a welcome sense of routine and clear purpose. At the forefront of all our minds, however, is the need for caution from every single member of our school community.

The following four guiding principles will point the way in our school in the coming weeks and months

Guiding Principles for Return to School

A sense of safety

Staff members and I will be working hard in the coming weeks to put in place as many safety measures as possible for both students and staff. We will be taking our lead from the documentation provided by DES. Upcoming letters to families will keep you informed of these measures as they unfold in the next few weeks.

A sense of calm

It is expected that most students will adapt quickly to the return to school. Some will require additional support and a few will need considerably more. Our intention is to support all in a calm and measured manner and to avoid the creation of an anxious school environment. I look forward so much to the sound and sight of our students once again going about their lives with fun, care for each other and diligence as they recommence their studies.

A sense of belonging and connectedness

Having been apart since 12 March last, our school community of 450 students and nearly 50 staff will finally come together in the week beginning Monday, 31 August. Staying in touch from 12 March last by remote means was not easy. We understand that remote teaching and learning was a challenge for all. We, as a staff will continue to work diligently to develop a sense of school togetherness once again as the new term commences, albeit with due regard to public safety measures

A sense of self and school community efficacy

Every single person entering Colaiste Muire Crosshaven from Monday, 31 August has both an individual and collective responsibility to do the right thing to achieve two key aims –

- Firstly, to keep Covid-19 out of our school and
- Secondly, to take certain actions to minimise its spread in the event that the virus does enter the school.

Accordingly, the following measures will be crucial for all of us:

- Frequent hand-washing/sanitisation
- Maintaining social distancing
- Practising proper respiratory etiquette
- Wearing face coverings
- Maintaining a hygienic school environment
- Staying away from school if unwell
- Not being abroad in the 14 day period prior to the return to school

I will be communicating more detailed approaches as the school re-opening becomes closer.

Department of Education Guidelines etc

Over the summer we have prepared tirelessly to ensure a safe return to school for all and we, the staff of Colaiste Muire look forward to seeing you all again in person in a few weeks. Our aim is always to ensure student and staff wellbeing and safety.

Currently we are following the **Government Roadmap for the Return to School** which we ask you read carefully. You can access this information on the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/>

Last week the government also issued guidance in relation to face coverings for students which reads, ***'It is now recommended that teachers and secondary school students wear face coverings, similar to those worn in shops or on public transport, when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained'***. Thus, all students and staff will be required to wear face masks in school.

Practical considerations in using face coverings

All staff and students wearing face coverings are reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitize their hands (using a hand sanitizer) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

Information is provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings using this link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

Return to school

- All students will be asked to fill out a Covid 19 Return to school form. Specific guidance will issue on this in due course
- Given the new guidelines on return to school our original back to school schedule will be replaced by the following :

All students are asked to attend introductory meetings in the school gym as follows:

Date	Year group	Time of assembly
Monday Aug 31 st	1 st year students –	9:30-12:00
Tuesday Sept 1 st	3 rd year students	9:00 – 10:30
	5 th year students	11:00- 12:30
	6 th year students	1:35- 3:35
Wed Sept 2 nd	2 nd year students	9:00-10:30
	4 th year students	11:00- 12:30
	6 th year students normal classes	11:00-3:35
Thursday Sept 3 rd	1 st and 6 th year students classes as normal	8:45-3:35
Friday Sept 4 th	2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th and 6 th year (No school for TY's or 1 st Yrs)	8:45-1:00
Monday Sept 7 th	All students return to school for normal classes	8:45-3:35

- Introductory meeting will last for 90 mins and will deal with the new arrangements and requirements related to Covid- 19 as well as the normal matters pertaining to the start of the new school year.
- Students will require copies for these introductory meetings
- Students are asked to arrive to school 5 mins before the start of assembly. All students will be entering the gym only and will not be entering the main school building until they will be accompanied to their base classes by their tutors during the assembly.
- All students are asked to abide by social distancing rules at all times and on entry to the gym must wear appropriate face coverings
- On completion of assemblies students will be asked to return home.
- We ask that students do not gather in the village or in households following or before assemblies
- The formal school uniform should be worn at all introductory meetings. Tracksuits will be worn on students PE day and Fridays—On Friday Sept 4th, however, we ask that all students wear formal uniform
- The school calendar for the year will be updated as necessary and posted to the website

Current work of school in preparation for the safe return of students and staff

- The school has its detailed Covid 19 Response Plan in place and is working through the measures contained therein on a daily basis as we prepare for re-opening
- We are currently making adjustments to room allocations to minimize the amount of movement by students around the school. Teaching and learning will be class based where teachers will be moving to classes and students will have base classes. More specific expectations will be issued in due course with regard student behaviour etc due to these changes
- Visitors to the school—
 - Visitors to the school will be kept to a minimum
 - We aim to use google meet as much as possible
 - Any necessary parents/guardians or visitor meetings in the school will be by appointment only and are asked to phone the school on arrival. You will then be collected by the teacher you are meeting outside the school and brought to the meeting room.
 - All visitors to the school will be asked to fill out a Visitor Covid 19 Self Declaration form prior to their appointment
- A one way system will be in operation in the school and this will be clearly illustrated for staff and students.
- Signage will be placed across the school building reminding the school community of the importance of
 - Physical distancing
 - Respiratory etiquette and
 - Good hand hygiene
- Hand sanitizers will be placed in each classroom and at every entrance/exit point
- Very specific guidelines will be issued for parents and students highlighting important modifications to prevent the entry/ spread Covid 19 in our school during the week prior to return to school.

The school office will open on Monday Aug 17th to process re-registration costs. The deadline for re-registration is Friday Aug 21st.

Finally, on behalf of all our team in Colaiste Muire, I would like to thank you for all your support and patience since March 12th and we really look forward to working with you all in person commencing on Aug 31st.

With best wishes,

A Doherty

Principal