



Dominican College
Taylor's Hill,
Galway

13th August 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well.

I know I speak for us all when I say that we are very much looking forward to having our students and teachers return to school at the end of August. When it was announced that schools would close on 12th March, few if any of us thought that we would not be back for the remainder of the school year.

A lot of work has been going on over the summer months in preparation for the reopening of the school. We all want to do our utmost to get the school back up and running and to ensure that our students and staff remain safe, protected and supported. With this in mind, we have been working with the DES and HSE guidelines for schools; engaging with an external Health and Safety Consultant; and consulting with students, Parents' Council and staff in putting in place a plan for the safe and effective operation of the school. I would, in particular, like to thank the students, parents and staff who have engaged constructively in helping us to refine our plan.

The roadmap issued by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) places many challenges on schools. We are working diligently to follow all the guidance, in order to ensure a safe environment for all members of our community and will undertake induction around Covid procedures and guidelines with all students when they return to school.

We will notify you of the detailed school Covid-19 plan and procedures over the next week or so, however, please note the following general points below in relation to the operation of the school:

- Classrooms will be class-based rather than teacher-based to minimise movement around the school.
- Classrooms have been reorganised and reconfigured to ensure physical distancing.
- There will be staggered lunch and break times to reduce the number of students in circulation around the school.
- Students will not have access to lockers in order to reduce congestion and ensure social distancing.
- There will be no canteen available so students must bring their own food each day.

- Students will wear their school uniform as normal, however, as PE changing rooms can no longer be used, students will wear their PE gear to school on the relevant days – school PE tracksuit for Juniors or appropriate sportswear for Seniors.
- We intend for after-school study to take place this year. Details will be provided when students return to school.
- All students will be required to wear face masks in accordance with DES guidelines (these are not fashion accessories and should not have any designs, logos or writing that could be perceived as being inappropriate for school).

In order to allow for adequate staff training, organisation, preparation and meetings, and for students to be given adequate Covid induction time, we have had to adjust our start dates. The new arrangements are as follows:

Thursday August 27 th	Staff Training & Organisation
Friday August 28 th	Staff Training & Organisation
Monday August 31 st	1 st & 6 th Year Induction (9am – 12:30pm)
Tuesday September 1 st	1 st Year Induction/Classes & 6 th Year Classes (9am – 12:30pm)
Wednesday September 2 nd	2 nd & 3 rd Years Induction (9am – 12:30pm)
Thursday September 3 rd	TY & 5 th Year Induction, 6 th Year Classes (9am – 12:30pm)
Friday September 4 th	All students – full school day

We will be writing to all parents and students over the coming week with further information about the start of the new school year and details about our Covid plan and procedures. Our key priority is ensuring that our students and staff remain safe and well and consequently, that the school can remain open for the coming school year. This will require a lot of cooperation and personal responsibility from everyone in our school community, and we have no doubt that this will be the case.

Regards,



ALAN KINSELLA
PRINCIPAL