



# ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

Holy Faith Convent, Glasnevin, Dublin 11



21<sup>st</sup> August 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian and Student,

My name is Paul Clarke and I am the incoming Principal in St Mary's Holy Faith Glasnevin. I am very excited to join the school and to work with such a dynamic group of staff, students and parents. I look forward to meeting you in person and working together to develop the school as a safe and caring learning community in the years ahead.

I am writing to you to keep you updated about the re-opening of school in the next fortnight. These are uncertain times so we will try to make things as clear and easily understood as possible for your daughter's safe return to school. I have broken this down into 2 sections:

1. What we've done to prepare the school.
2. What we ask you to do to prepare for a safe return to school.

This is an ever-evolving situation but I firmly believe that if we approach it together (as parents, students and staff) then we will come through it together. If you or your daughter have any concerns, we will address them at induction and in the coming weeks.

This is an ever-evolving situation but we will try to keep you updated as much as possible about the changes in response to Covid 19. I look forward to meeting you during the year ahead.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Clarke'.

Paul Clarke

Principal

## Our Preparations

We are working at present to put a plan in place to ensure that our school opens as safely as possible within the public health guidelines and in line with the Roadmap for Re-opening our Post Primary Schools. This is a challenge, but one we are working hard to overcome. The following are some of the areas we are working on:

### 1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Currently, we are adding to our supplies of hand sanitisers, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) etc to ensure safe hygiene across the school. All staff are undergoing health and safety training to prepare for a safe return to work for all in the school. We will provide similar health and safety training / induction for all students on their first day back to school. This will instruct the students on hand hygiene, maintaining social distancing, respiratory hygiene / coughing etiquette and environmental hygiene. We have placed reminders about this in all classrooms, toilets and corridors etc.

### 2. Deep Clean

The school has undergone an extensive deep clean and we are putting daily cleaning procedures in place to ensure that all rooms and common areas are clean and sanitised.

### 3. Social Distancing

We are hiring several storage containers to remove all unnecessary items from rooms, corridors etc. This is to maximise social distancing across all classrooms and the school. We have maintained one metre social distancing in all classes. This will mean that all students will have to wear face masks when in school.

### 4. Lockers

To reach one metre social distancing, we have placed all lockers into storage. Lockers are metal and would require detailed daily cleaning. They can also become communal areas for students to gather and they take up much needed space. Every subject is different- where possible, teachers will reduce the amount of books needed in school. We are creating and adapting ways to access books online or by using devices that we hope will alleviate the need for students to bring in all books. We will discuss this in more detail with your daughter during her induction.

### 5. PODS and Anchoring Classes

Before Covid 19, students would be timetabled to go to a teacher's classroom for classes. However, we are following Government advice and we are placing each year group in pods together- this means that, in so far as possible, all 1<sup>st</sup> year classes will take place in the same rooms, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year classes will take place in the same rooms etc. The aim of this is to limit the travel on corridors and interactions with students in other year groups. The exception will be when students are going to specialist subject rooms, Science labs, kitchens or to the Gym. We will keep this under review.

### 6. Breaktimes / Lunchtimes

The school is organising added supervision at break times and before / after schools. Corridor and classroom supervision will begin at 8.30. We are also looking at marquees so some students can have their lunch outside but in a sheltered environment with social distancing.

## 7. Coming and Going to School

We are doing everything we can to ensure safe social distancing in classes and in school. We need your co-operation in ensuring this while your daughter is coming and going to school. We strongly encourage that, where possible, your daughter walks to school. Seniors will arrive and leave through the black double gate and enter the school through the glass passage. Juniors will arrive and leave through the pedestrian gate, proceed passed the Gym and enter the school through the Staff Door. All students must sanitise their hands before entering and leaving the school.

## 8. Glanmore

We are speaking with Glanmore about the safest arrangements for the Breakfast Club and lunches. We recommend that you bring healthy food and water for break and lunch in school.

## 9. Induction

Students will be brought into school at agreed time (Time to follow). Induction will begin in the Gym and students will then be brought to their base classes.

## 10. Policies and Procedures

We are reviewing our policies and procedures in key areas to maintain a safe learning environment for us all. Where possible, this review will be done in consultation with staff, students and parents. The same basic principles will apply- showing respect and care for ourselves and others. The school must have full co-operation in all aspects of school life to ensure safety, care and the continuity of teaching and learning.

## 11. Health Advice- Our system re Health Issues

- Any student/family that has been overseas during August in destinations not on the green list, must have completed two weeks of quarantine before returning to the school community. Please email or phone the school and notify us if this applies to you and/or your family.
- Any student who is unwell MUST remain at home. This is for her health and safety and that of the whole school community.
- If a student/family member or close contact has become unwell with suspected Covid-19, it is crucial that the student does not attend school before consulting with your family G.P. and that you notify the school reception by telephone without delay.
- If your daughter is in a "very high risk," please contact the school to speak to us about it.
- Please continue to inform yourself of all Covid 19 information by checking hse.ie and gov.ie websites.

## 12. Procedures for Illness in School

- Any person who is unwell MUST remain at home and not come to school.
- If a student becomes unwell in school, they will be assessed by our first aid responders and more than likely sent home. This is for the health and safety of your daughter and all in the school.
- A student who is unwell will wait in a separate room while waiting to be collected from school.
- Parents / Guardians MUST ensure that you are contactable during the day- Please inform the office if you have changed phone numbers.

### 13. Digital Sign in and Out

In the rare occasion that a student may be signing in late or leaving early, this will only be done through the school app. We will give you and your daughter further information about this in the coming days.

### 14. PE

PE is a crucial part of the health and wellbeing of students. To avoid delays and breaches of social distancing in changing rooms, students will be allowed to wear PE gear for the full day that they are timetabled for PE. At all other times, students may not wear the PE tracksuit and are expected in full uniform.

### 15. Remote Learning

I am conscious that each of us has had different experiences of remote learning during the lockdown from last March. It is our aim to enhance the ICT / remote learning skills and capacity of all students in case there is another lockdown.

### 16. Meetings

All meetings must take place remotely- by phone. This is to limit contact in school for the health and safety of students, staff and parents.

### 17. Wellbeing

A return to school may cause apprehension and anxiety. The health, safety, development and wellbeing of everyone in the school community is our priority. *We are looking forward to re-opening the school and seeing your daughter return to school again.* The first day of school will help to inform your daughter about all the most up-to-date information in relation to our plans and to give her an opportunity to re-adjust to being back in school.

I am sure that we will adjust to the new routines quickly and get back to a new normality. We will continue to review everything we do in school to ensure your daughter continues to be safe, cared for and happy in St Mary's.



## What we ask Parents and Students to do



Here is a Checklist for how best to prepare for your daughter's return to school. If you speak about it together, it will build confidence for you and your daughter in preparing to return to school.



To Prepare for a full return to school, We will...

Be positive- you may be feeling anxious about returning to school. Remember, we will get through this together as students, parents and staff

Inform ourselves- read the school Covid Plan, check hse.ie / gov.ie, learn how to avoid Covid and what to do to keep healthy... we will teach you these things too

Adapt- things will change in school so listen to what we ask you to do and make the small changes that will make a big difference

Remember- some things will change but others will stay the same- you have staff who will listen, help and answer any questions we can

Plan- work out routines that will make school easier- staff will help to make things easier to come to school and to learn

Prepare- download the school app, buy face masks and sanitisers etc, have your books and materials, clear a homework space

Co-operate- listen to staff as we show you how to be around school

Ask Questions- if you are unsure about anything, ask!

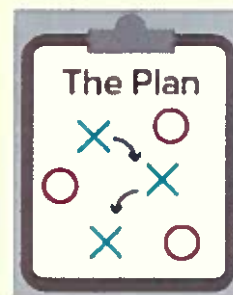
Look after others- we all have good days and not so good days... check in with each other. Be a good friend and let us know who needs help

Check in when you check out- after each day, speak to your parents / guardian. Tell them what worked well and what was difficult

Speak to us- Talk to your teachers, Tutor or Year-Head about how things are going.

Look after our own wellbeing- school and work is one part of your life. Remember to relax, have fun (safely), plan nice things to do at weekends...

Life goes on, let's make the most of it!



# TOGETHER WE CAN

