



ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL
HOLY FAITH CONVENT, GLASNEVIN, DUBLIN 11



13th August 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We hope you are all keeping safe and well and that you have enjoyed a restful break with your families after what was for all of us a very anxious and uncertain term. As the new term approaches our thoughts and prayers are, as ever, with you all and especially those who have been impacted negatively by the Coronavirus. We are very aware of how stressful the last term was for our 3rd year students and for yourselves and truly appreciate the great efforts you made to ensure that the remote learning initiative was successful, and we now look forward to the safe return to school for all staff and students.

The announcement on March 12th of the closure of all schools, colleges etc., marked the beginning of a series of challenges across the education sector as a result of COVID-19. The interests of students and their families, as well as the safety of our staff, have always been paramount as we have worked through these challenges. As we prepare to reopen the school the safety and wellbeing of our school community continues to be our overriding concern. The *Full Return to School Roadmap* was published on 27th July and it sets out how schools will reopen for all students from the end of August and what the operation of our schools will look like in a COVID-19 context. The Roadmap has been developed in line with public health advice and follows comprehensive and intensive engagement with all education stakeholders. It also reflects a consideration of approaches adopted in other jurisdictions, which have been finalised in recent weeks.

Following the detailed guidance available to schools we have a team working to prepare the building for the full return of our school community. Our main priority is to ensure that St Mary's is a safe place for all students, staff and visitors.

The purpose of this letter is to highlight some important information about the return to school and we will be in touch again soon with a more detailed schedule for the first day and week(s).

St Mary's will re-open on the 27th August and the start date for Transition Year students is **Friday 28th August 2020**. This will be an important information/induction day. There will be no classes for TY students on Monday 31st August, Tuesday 1st September and Wednesday 2nd September and classes for all students will begin on **Thursday 3rd September** and will end at 1.10pm during the first week. To ensure the safety of our Transition Year students and to enable freedom of movement to engage in a wide variety of socially distanced activities we are following government guidelines and placing the year group together on one floor where all their classes and activities will take place, other than PE which will be held in the gym or outdoors. Hand sanitisation stations will

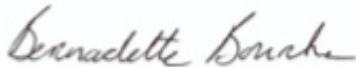
be placed in all rooms and at all entrances and exits and education and training in hygiene procedures will be prioritised for all students during the first few weeks as they settle in. The most recent recommendation regarding the wearing of masks/face coverings was issued on 7th August and it states that ‘teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained’. More specific details will be included in our next letter and we will continue to follow the most up to date guidance in relation to this and all other safety issues at all times.

We would urge all parents/guardians who have not already done so to download the School App in order to receive important daily notifications. All school payments are done through the Shop on the School App which can be downloaded by searching for *St. Mary’s Holy Faith S.S.* on the App Store or on Google Play (instructions enclosed). Please see our website <https://www.stmaryshfcglasnevin.com/> and <https://www.gov.ie/backtoschool> for return to school updates. We have also included in this pack a letter to parents/guardians from the Minister for Education and Skills, Norma Foley.

Some of you might be aware that I am retiring from the position as principal of St Mary’s on 31st August. I regret that I did not get the chance to inform you of this in person while the school was operational. However, I do so now, and wish each one of your daughters happiness, health and success during their transition year and as they continue their second level journey in St Mary’s. It also gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Mr Paul Clarke who will take over as principal at the beginning of the new school year and who is already working alongside us to prepare the school for the safe return of our students and staff. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself, Ms O’Donnell, Ms Devaney and the entire school community to welcome Mr Clarke to St Mary’s and to wish him every success and happiness as he takes up his new position, and in the years ahead.

We look forward to welcoming your daughter back into the community of St Mary’s Secondary School, and to working closely with you during the coming months and years.

Yours faithfully,



Bernadette Bourke
Principal



Paul Clarke
Principal

