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St Colman's College,  
Castlegar,  
Claremorris,  
Co. Mayo.

*Principal*  
Mr Roy Hession

*Deputy Principal*

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17<sup>th</sup> August, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope this message finds you well and that you and your family are doing well in these unprecedented times. The past few months have been very difficult for everyone, but we are now looking forward to welcoming students and teachers back to school in the coming weeks. We are working hard to make our school as safe as possible for everyone and we are utilising the guidelines provided by the Department of Education and Skills to that end. **Our priority is to minimise the risk of Covid-19 entering the school and if it is introduced, to prevent its spread.**

If a student displays symptoms he will be immediately isolated to a designated room in the College and his parents/guardians will be contacted and advised to collect him and to make phone contact with their GP.

Our school will be open to essential visitors only and parents/guardians will have to make prior appointment before arriving at the school to meet anybody.

We will be encouraging all students to continue to adhere to the Government guidelines that have been in place over the past number of months, namely: to continue washing hands regularly, to exercise coughing/sneezing etiquette, to practice social distancing as necessary. We would equally advise students, that while these measures are important inside the school, they are just as important when students are outside school.

**There will be a number of things to keep in mind:**

- We have upgraded the toilets in the school, providing hot water and sanitising soap throughout. Hand sanitiser will also be available at the doors of the toilets.
- Hand sanitiser stations will be available at all entrances/exits in the College and in every classroom and specialist room. Students will be expected to sanitise their hands on entry to the school each morning, on entry to each class and before and after breaks.
- Our canteen facility will be suspended for the time being and all students will be expected to bring their lunches to school each day. Hot water will be provided for Tea/Coffee at breaks.
- Our gym will be used as a lunchroom for the foreseeable future and as our Assembly area for students when necessary.

- All year groups will be designated specific areas in the gym for break times, which will be staggered to facilitate social distancing.
- We are amending our timetable to one-hour classes instead of the existing forty-minute classes in order to reduce student movement on the corridors and thereby facilitating better social distancing.
- Lockers will not be available to students when school reopens. This will mean that students will have to take books/copies etc. to and from school each day. Teachers will be flexible with students in this regard to reduce the weight of school bags. We may review and amend this policy early in the first term depending on circumstances.
- School uniforms are to be worn by all students each day. In line with public health guidelines it is recommended that uniforms are to be washed frequently.
- In line with DES Covid 19 Guidelines students will be required to wear face masks/coverings where a “two metre social distance” can’t be maintained, which will, in effect, be most situations in school. A student should bring one mask to school with him each day. We urge parents to have a number of masks available so that they can be washed as a clean mask will be necessary each day.
- Students may not share books, biros, rulers, calculators, art equipment etc.
- Students should also bring to school a small bottle of personal hand sanitiser.
- Details regarding participation in sport and extra-curricular activities have yet to be devised and will be made known to students on an ongoing basis.

As previously notified students will return to school progressively for the new academic year as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Years	Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September
6 <sup>th</sup> Years	Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September
3 <sup>rd</sup> Years	Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> September
5 <sup>th</sup> Years	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> September
2 <sup>nd</sup> Years and LCAs	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September
TYs	Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> September

- LCAs and TYs will be required to come to school for Induction on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September; TYs from 9.30 to 11 a.m. and LCAs from 11.15 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. They must wear their school uniforms. They will be allowed to go home at the end of the induction meeting. LCAs will begin their Work Experience on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September, TYA on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September and TYB on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September.
- Once students return to school, they are expected to attend each day thereafter, unless notified otherwise.

### **Reminder to anyone attending school who has travelled abroad:**

Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone.

‘It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of ‘normal precautions’ (“green”), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school

staff, parents and children or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible’.

**Please note that these guidelines and arrangements are provisional and are subject to change, possibly at short notice, in the interests of health and safety of all the school community.**

Further updates and details to follow by text, social media and on our school website, [www.stcolmans.ie](http://www.stcolmans.ie). Please follow this link for further government back-to-school information, [www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/](http://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/)

There is no doubt that we will face many challenges in the weeks ahead, but we are confident that, with your help and support, we will overcome these challenges. We look forward to working with you to continue providing a holistic education for your sons in the year ahead.

Yours faithfully,

Roy Hession  
Principal