



Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome to the second bulletin for the new school year 2020/2021. This bulletin will discuss the practical issues of returning to school, items of interest and will attempt to answer any questions submitted or areas you looked for clarification on.

## Junior Cert Results

This year the Junior Cycle learning achievement of students will be recognised through a specific form of certification designed to meet the exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Students' certification will involve two elements:

- A School Report setting out the learning achievements of students in Junior Cycle.
- A State Certificate of completion of Junior Cycle from the Department of Education and Skills.

We are awaiting the State Certificate to be issued to us and we will present both to students as soon as it arrives (the date should be similar to other years approximately the second/third week of September).

## Transition year

We look forward to welcoming back our three classes of transition year students on September 8<sup>th</sup>. We understand students may be concerned about TY activities going ahead in light of current circumstances.

It is our aim to provide a most worthwhile and enjoyable learning experience for all our TY students similar to all previous years. We are working to ensure that learning for students in this year's TY, as in a typical TY, involves a strong engagement with knowledge, the development of personal, social and learning skills, a focus on wellbeing and a strong emphasis on creativity. A lot of work has gone into investigating and securing alternative workshops/activities and events (online and otherwise) to replace any current activities that may not be possible at present.

The annual musical, always a highlight for TY students has not been ruled out at this stage—we will follow all public health guidelines and we will see what is possible for next January/February. Our music and drama department are looking forward to meeting students to discuss plans for a main production (or alternatives if needed) on their return. We know we have a very talented/musical group of students in TY and we will do all we can to give them the opportunity to share their talents with you all.

Decisions on tours will not be made at this stage but we will closely follow all advice and developments.

Work experience - we will work with local employers to facilitate work experience where possible or alternative equivalent learning (the non-experiential aspects of work experience) if needed, such as careers investigations, modules in employment skills including, for example, online courses/modules on Health and Safety in work, virtual tours of workplaces, businesses and companies, online team building projects etc.

We are aware that students may have had different experiences of learning and engagement during the school closure and we will work to bridge any gaps we may find. We have also timetabled guidance classes for all TY groups.

## What will the first day back look like ?

On arrival at the school each year group will be met by their tutor/year head and directed to their entrance door. (We have a number of entrances operating to enable social distancing—once assigned students will use the same entrance point each day.)

On entry each student will be required to use the hand sanitizer stations set up at every entrance. Sanitizers are also set up in every classroom. Face coverings must be worn. Students are advised to engage in regular hand washing. We also recommend that students carry their own supply of sanitizer with them in a ziploc bag with 2 face masks.

Students then proceed directly to their assigned classroom. Students are not permitted to leave their designated area of the school. Tutors/Year heads will assign set seats for students in their classroom which must be used at all times. All classrooms have been set up to ensure a minimum 1 metre physical distancing. In specialist rooms you will also be assigned a set seat with your own class group.

We have staggered break times to enable social distancing as follows :

	First break	Second break
Junior Breaks (First, Second and Third years)	10.55-11.10	12.30 - 1.05
Senior Breaks (Ty, Fifth and Sixth years)	11.35 -11.50	1.10 - 1.45

Students are encouraged to bring their own lunch and water but students are allowed to go up town if they wish. Please note that no drinking water facilities are available in the school. The students are allowed to eat their lunch in their classrooms but we will encourage students to go outside for fresh air. We have ordered outdoor seating for the courtyard, the back of the school and some for the front of the building. It is important that all students practice social distancing, preferably 2m, during non-class times and breaks.

Outdoor breaks will also be facilitated during set class times to allow students to remove their masks while socially distancing.

There is a responsibility on all members of the school community to cooperate and comply with health, safety and wellbeing protocols which reflect advice given by the Department of Education and Skills, the Health Protection Surveillance Centre and the Health and Safety Authority. Non-compliance with the protocols will be treated as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour and may result in sanctions as appropriate. If necessary, a student may be sent home immediately to protect the health and wellbeing of all.

Students must not share items with each other under any circumstances e.g. biros, textbooks, clothing, etc.

Cleaning - Extra cleaning staff will be employed to ensure best cleaning practice, with particular focus on touch points, specialist rooms and toilets.

## Where do we go?

Class	Entrance door	Classrooms	Exit door
Leaving Certs	Door at back of West Wing	F1 Room 1W F2 Room 2W	Door at back of West Wing
Fifth years	Door underneath first stairs (beside 2G)	E1 Room 2H E2 Room 10 H	Door underneath second stairs near Technical graphics room
Transition Years	Main Entrance TY1 TY2 Entrance at gym TY3	T1 Room 24 G TY2 Room 23G TY3 Room 13G	Main Entrance TY1 TY2 Entrance at gym TY3
Third years	West Wing main entrance door	C1 Room 7W C2 Room 5W C3 Room 6W	West Wing main entrance door
Second years	Main entrance B3 and B4 Door at gym B1 and B2	B1 Room 10G B2 Room 11G B3 Room 2G B4 Room 1G	Main entrance B3 and B4 Door at gym B1 and B2
First years	Door at Home Economics room	A1 Room 29G A2 Room 28G A3 Room 27G A4 Room 25G	Door at Home Economics room
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First years will meet their tutors at the school entrance and will be brought to their entrance door.</li> <li>• A letter/text will advise each first year which class group they are in.</li> </ul>			

- Supervisors will be on hand to direct students to their classrooms.
- In general students are not permitted to leave their classroom areas.
- Toilet facilities will be set for each year group.
- (All will be explained to each year group on their first day back)

## **Access to Building**

- Students will not have the free movement within the school that they once enjoyed at the beginning of the day and during breaks.
- Students are not permitted to remain in the school building once classes have finished for the day and must promptly leave the school grounds. This is to commence the cleaning and sanitising of the building for the following day.
- Access to the school building will be strictly by appointment only for all visitors. A detailed sign in/sign out (contact tracing) log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained. All visitors must perform proper hygiene on arrival at school and maintain 2m distancing from students and staff while in the building

## **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.

## **Student with symptoms of Covid-19**

Any member of the school community who becomes unwell/shows symptoms of Covid-19 will immediately be taken to the designated isolation room. The protocols in the Sancta Maria College Response Plan will then be followed.

Parents will be contacted immediately if a student feels unwell.

Students must be collected from school at the earliest possible opportunity and contact must be made with your GP.

It is vital that you do not send your child to school if they are feeling unwell in the morning or complaining of/showing any of the following signs:

- Fever
- A Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Loss or change of smell/taste

It is also imperative that we have a current phone number and email address for all parents/guardians and contact details of a nominated emergency contact person.

## Ventilation

The advice given to us at present is to ventilate each room as much as possible by keeping windows/doors open as much as is possible.

Students are encouraged to wear extra clothing inside their uniform and we will review wearing jackets in class as the weather declines.

5 minute mask breaks will be given when students have a number of concurrent classes.

Many studies have been carried out recently on the need to ensure adequate ventilation in classrooms. The concentration levels of CO<sub>2</sub> must be kept low in order to prevent the transmission of droplets. A low temperature in the room also means the virus is more stable. We are purchasing some CO<sub>2</sub> alarms for some rooms as an added precaution.

## Face masks

The current guidelines are as follows:

*It is a requirement 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. Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.*

*Cloth face coverings should be worn by all staff and students other than the following groups:*

- Any person with difficulty breathing*
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated*
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance*
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.*

## High risk students

We are currently awaiting the guidelines on helping our high risk students (we expect to receive guidelines this week) Any parent that has concerns that a return to school may be challenging please contact us on 098 66343 or [info@sanctamaria.ie](mailto:info@sanctamaria.ie). Together with the guidelines we will work on a plan to support their safe return to school if possible

At Sancta Maria College we very much understand that the past number of months have been difficult times for students and you their parents. When planning for the return to our school, our focus is very much placed on the wellbeing and safety of all our school community. We will endeavour, as much as possible, to ensure that our students will settle back happily into school. Although we all appreciate that there is no “zero risk” return to school and we may need to alter our plans regularly but we have put comprehensive measures in place in our school to help keep our school community safe and well. Our sincere hope is that all of our students can now pick up and progress in their learning and that they experience as full and as enjoyable a return to school as is possible.

The safe return to school for our students will require the constant and full support of all staff and parents/guardians to follow all public health requirements that help to prevent COVID-19 from coming into our school.

If you have any further queries please contact us and please check out the gov.ie back to school helpline <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/389bd-topics-being-raised-on-the-back-to-school-helpline/>

Thank you

<b>RETURN TO SCHOOL DATES</b>	
Thursday August 27th	Staff Covid Training day
Friday August 28th	First year Induction
Monday August 31st	Staff training day
Tuesday September 1st	First years
Wednesday September 2nd	Leaving certs Induction
Thursday September 3rd	Third years Induction
Friday September 4th	Fifth years Induction
Monday September 7th	Second years Induction
Tuesday September 8th	Transition years (All students)

Each Year group will have an induction session on their first day back where protocols/ procedures etc. will be explained. Following their induction day they are back full time and following their normal timetable.