



Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome to the third bulletin for the 2020/2021 school year.

As you can imagine the return to school this year has been and continues to be a monumental task with such a vast amount of work to be done in a short space of time. Accommodating class groups both current and extra year groups needed due to social distancing, re-timetabling, complying with the ever changing guidelines and suggestions, enforcing new hygiene measures, organising extra supervision and cleaning rotas etc. has been challenging. We will not get everything right straight off, some issues only arise as we all begin to settle in but we will do our very best to ensure as safe a return as possible for every student and staff member. We all agree here how lovely it is to have the students back again in the building, settling back and re-engaging in their work and the chat and buzz that we missed so much is back in the corridors once again.

This bulletin will discuss some of your questions raised on returning to school and items of interest.

Bus Transport

If you use school transport we ask that you please ensure that your child know about the guidelines issued by the department of Education and Skills (available on our website).

It has been suggested that students always sit in their pre-assigned seating which will be next to a sibling or a child from their class group where possible (this should be the same child at all times) or followed the locally agreed protocols by individual bus companies.

Any concerns should be raised with individual drivers/bus companies.

Dates for your Diary

Amazing Brains (an award winning social enterprise) will visit Sancta Maria College on September 15th and 16th to work with students to develop the mind-set and study skills to succeed in school. They offer a 90 minute workshop to second and fifth year students with follow up support.

They also offer a very popular “parent power” evening which is a practical meaningful activity based workshop that helps parents to help their children develop the essential study techniques to succeed in schools and exams. This will be held on September 15th with all social distancing regulations in place. More details will be issued next week

Visitors to the school

Visits to schools during the day must be minimised as much as is possible and by prior appointment only at this time.

Visitors **must sign a contact tracing log and a self declaration form in advance** of any appointment—these can be emailed to you in advance of an agreed appointment.

Visitors admitted to schools are subject to all controls as apply to staff entering the school, proper hygiene procedures and 2m distancing at the designated contact point.

Lunch times

We strongly advise students to bring a packed lunch and water with them to school each day. They can have their lunch in their classroom and enjoy a walk afterwards around the school or down town. All students may not be able to access our local shops or restaurants due to social distancing limitations and queuing time so students may not be able to purchase a lunch in the given time.

Arriving late/leaving early

As in previous years this is strongly discouraged when at all possible. However we appreciate some appointments can not always be changed.

Should you need to collect your child early please email info@sanctamaria before 9 am on the day of the appointment stating the time the student will be collected. This will be noted for the relevant teacher. When you arrive to collect the student just call the office 098 66342 from your car and the student will be called out of class.

Should your child need to arrive late again please email info@sanctamaria or call the office 098 66342 before 9am stating the time the student will arrive. This will be noted for the relevant teacher. The entrance point for the student will be opened for them at the stated time.

Notes to or from parents/teachers

In previous years we have used the notes at the back of the diary for this purpose but in current circumstances we are using email contact only. Explanations for absence etc. can be emailed directly to the class tutor. They will then amend the absence on the system to explained, illness etc. All tutors have an email with their name@[sanctamaria.ie](mailto:info@sanctamaria.ie). Tutors will remind their class of their contact details.

Face Masks

We have had a number of questions about the wearing of face masks. We have no choice but to follow 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.*

Leaving Cert Results

Best of luck to all our students awaiting their Leaving Cert results on Monday.

Results of the Leaving Certificate 2020 Calculated Grades will issue directly to students through the student portal on Monday 7th September at 9.00am.

The following link from careersportal provides a very helpful guide for the LC 2020 class:

https://careersportal.ie/parents/parents_whats_next.php?utm_campaign=CareersPortal_Newsletter_September_7th

If students need any assistance or have questions regarding points/courses etc. please email Mr Berkeley (richardberkeley@sanctamaria.ie) or Ms Gill (mariangill@sanctamaria.ie) on Monday.

School Bags

We acknowledge and appreciate your concerns on the weight of the school bags on a daily basis. Originally we hoped to have storage available in base classrooms but we are now following the “leave no trace” guidelines leaving all classrooms /staff room totally empty at the end of the day.

This is to facilitate thorough cleaning and sanitisation of the rooms each evening and also should a sudden school disruption be necessary, students will have all their resources at home.

So what can we do to help?

- Each room has a base classroom—no other class uses this room at any time during the day. All students books and bag can be left in this room during break-times etc.
- When moving to specialist rooms students just need to bring the book/copy necessary for that subject.
- So once inside the school building there should be no need to carry the bags /books around.

We are working on the main problem of carrying bags in and out of school and we hope in the next week or two to have all measures in place. We just ask in the meantime for your patience, we will get there and until then we will not insist on textbooks in class just copies and pens and anything specified as needed by a teacher on a given day. Students will be told in advance what might be necessary to bring.

- We are updating our projectors and have ordered visualisers for all classrooms so the electronic version of the text book can be viewed on the projector screen for all to see without the need for their own individual book in front of them. This is also useful for doing live demonstrations, which all the class can watch on the screen at the top, without leaving their seat and without the need to have their own book in front of them
- We also use Google classroom for sharing of resources, assignments etc., with students, and this has proven to be a great success.
- Our IT department are busy upskilling staff in the use of new technology and also introducing it to our new students. All first years have been set up with a sanctamaria email account and are being set up in their class groups on Google classroom. We are sending some emails to them directly to get them checking in to their account and some work is being posted on Google classroom to introduce our blended learning platform.

Blended Learning

- In the event of any disruption to classroom based teaching or for students unable to attend school at this time, it is recommended that teachers and students engage in a system of blended learning. Teachers and students will combine good practice from both face-to-face learning and online learning; in turn this allows for the continued building and deepening of skills. To assist and support your son/daughter, we would ask that parents familiarise themselves with Google classroom <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgS-hoSIjnw>

For Parents of First Years

We hope your child has had an enjoyable and positive experience of Sancta Maria College to date. They have been busy trying out all the subjects and getting used to their new school environment., meeting new friends etc.

We have asked them to return their subject options form today (A few have forgotten to bring them in—that is no problem you can email their choices or a copy of the form to the class tutor or to finolafoy@sanctamaria.ie.)

We can not guarantee that all student will get all their top choices but we will do our best to ensure they will get two out of their top three if at all possible. There will be a little flexibility for the first week or two - if there is any problem please encourage them to talk to their class tutor or Ms Foy and we will do our best to sort things out for them.

It is good to encourage them to come to their teacher or tutor with any issues they may have on a day to day basis as it helps them gain a little more independence and responsibility.

The Institute Of Guidance Counsellors suggest the transition to secondary school can be viewed as a healthy, worthwhile and indeed necessary experience that is all part of becoming a healthy independent adult, suggesting “maybe it’s time to let go of their hand and instead - look over their shoulder”.

We look forward to getting to know the first years over this term and are organising some class bonding fun activities for them in the next week or two.

Child Protection

All of us who are involved with working with children and young people must do our utmost to ensure their protection and welfare while in our care. At Sancta Maria we have established systems in place to help support students at all times.

All classes have a class tutor assigned to them for help with day to day issues. Each year group has a Year-head/Assistant Year-head assigned to them. The Year Head on behalf of the school community takes on the role of overseeing the welfare of a year group so that learning, at every level of the person, is supported.

A pastoral care team meet weekly with the priority of promoting the welfare and safety of every child and young person who attends Sancta Maria College. (Pauline Moran, Finola Foy, Richard Berkeley, Marian Gill, Joan Rennick and Chris Holloway)

The Principal Ms Pauline Moran acts as the DLP (Designated Liaison Person) This person will liaise with statutory agencies responsible for child protection and welfare and will be the resource person to any worker or volunteer who has child protection concerns. In the absence of the DLP the Deputy Principal Ms Finola Foy acts as the DDLP (Deputy Designated Liaison Person)

Sancta Maria College has in place: A Child protection Risk Assessment Statement A Child protection Safeguarding Statement. Both are reviewed annually and notice of review together with the statements are circulated to all relevant parties, displayed on our website and issued to our Patron.

Check out our website sanctamaria.ie for current statement