

Return to School Preparations Continue:

Dear Parent,

It is my hope to keep you updated and informed on our progress in preparation for the return to school. As indicated in my letter on August 10th, we will be communicating by email from now on.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up:

The school will open for students each day at 8:30am. Students will be unable to enter the premises until this time in the mornings. Students are asked to use the assigned entry point and make their way directly to their first class. Classes will commence each day at 9:00am. The exit of students will be staggered over the last 15 minutes at the end of each school day, to limit the number of students exiting the school at any one time. Details will be discussed with each year group at their induction. The school will be closed for cleaning and sanitizing each evening at 4:30pm. Therefore, all students must have vacated the school premises by this time.

As you are aware students will return to school on a phased basis. Details of the induction programme will be given to each year group prior to their commencement date.

Timetable:

A large volume of work has been carried out on the timetable in the last number of weeks. This work has been necessary in order to ensure that the school meets with public health requirements, allows for the mandatory one-metre physical distancing requirement in each classroom and ensures that students and teachers are protected and can work and learn in a positive and nurturing environment.

Classrooms:

All classrooms have been carefully measured in the last number of weeks, in order to establish the capacity of each room and to implement the one-metre distancing rule. Staff have decluttered their rooms and removed any books and furniture which are not essential, which is helpful in maximising room capacity. Two new prefab classrooms were sourced over the last few weeks, arrived to the school last week and have been installed. These are currently being fitted out with chairs and desks etc. We have also converted three existing spaces within the school into classrooms, which gives a total of five additional classrooms. This will allow the school to continue to follow a teacher-based classroom schedule and will also allow a reduction in class sizes where necessary, in order to comply with social distancing requirements. This will prove very beneficial in many ways, but in particular with addressing the cleaning and sanitizing process of rooms.

Small Break and Lunch Break:

In order to implement social distancing guidelines, the decision has been made to operate two morning breaks and two lunch breaks, which will be divided according to junior and senior students. Morning breaks will be 10.30 – 10.45 and 11.00 – 11.15 and lunch breaks will be 12.15 – 12.55 and 1.15 – 1.55. We will continue to operate a Canteen Service as normal.

Schoolbooks & Lockers:

As stated previously, we hope to continue to make lockers available to students at present. Clear guidelines will be in place regarding how students are to access their locker, so that they comply with social distancing requirements and access will be restricted at all other times. Books have been placed in each student's locker and a locker code will be supplied to each student when they pay their School Fee of €150. Students are advised to bring their pencil case and one copybook on their first day and they will be updated on the stationery requirements for each class on their return to school by their individual teachers.

Outdoor areas:

As I have already indicated, a one-way system will operate in the school at all times. Significant work has taken place to ensure that this is possible. For example, a concrete ramp has been built to allow the flow of the one-way system and flower beds have been removed and replaced by tarmac outside the staff room in order to ease congestion and to provide outside areas for students.

Signage:

Considerable research has taken place in order to secure all the appropriate Covid 19 display signage which is necessary throughout the school. These will indicate the one-way system, social distancing rules, and hygiene etiquette, in addition to all other appropriate information

PPE:

As you are aware, it is required that all staff and students must wear a mask if a 2-metre distance rule cannot be maintained. I expect to receive further clarification from the Department of Education & Skills in due course. A Perspex shield is currently being attached to each teacher's desk in their classroom, as an extra precaution.

Covid Response Plan:

It is a mandatory requirement that each school formulate a Covid Response Plan. This document is currently being prepared and will be circulated to all parents prior to school commencement.

Cleaning and Sanitizing:

Additional cleaning arrangements have been organised which will be a critical element of our Covid Response Plan. Sanitizing stations are now installed across the school, in each classroom and throughout the common areas. Procedures will be outlined in detail to staff and students as to how the Sanitizing Plan will be implemented on a daily basis.

Dealing with a Suspected Covid 19 Case:

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19 will be an integral part of our Covid Response Plan. In the event of a suspected Covid 19 case in our school, the Designated Isolation Area will be the former small music room on the ground floor of the St. Joseph's building.

Student Health and Well Being:

Considering the difficult and challenging months our students may have experienced since March, it is a priority to support and assist our students in every way possible on their return to school. Many students will be anxious and fearful and their mental health and well-being will be of the utmost importance and our first priority on our return. All students, including those who find it a little tougher to adjust, will be helped by the student support systems available within the school.

The Department has provided a comprehensive set of guidelines for schools to help support the wellbeing of the whole school community as we transition back to school. The full document can be found [here](#)

Miscellaneous:

I am optimistic that all students will participate in PE this year. Further consultation will be required in relation to this matter. Clarification will also be necessary in relation to extra-curricular activities and Evening Study. At present, the main priority is to settle all students back to the classroom and to monitor and assess other activities thereafter.

Contact details:

Parents are asked to ensure that their contact details, which have been supplied to the school, are accurate and up to date. Please email the office on info@moatecs.com if you have changed address, phone number or email address. As stated above, we will be communicating mainly by email into the future.

Other material for the whole school community is posted on www.gov.ie/backtoschool in the post-primary section. This is a live site and documentation will be posted there as resources are added. In addition, please find attached a letter to parents from Minister Foley, Department of Education & Skills for your information.

The above plans are currently in place in order to meet current Public Health Guidelines. Some of the above information is subject to change as we take on the challenge of implementing a full school return, and assess and monitor our progress. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or require further information.

Kind regards,

Tom Lowry

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