**RE: Re-opening of St. Colman’s Boys’ School**

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I hope you and your families are keeping well. Thank you most sincerely for your patience, for your engagement with the school and for the many messages of support received.

We are preparing to re-open our school safely, in line with current guidance and recommendations and we ask for your continued support at this very strange time. To ensure that our school is as safe a place as possible, changes have been made to Custom & Practice.

Compliance and cooperation during this difficult and challenging time is vital for the wellbeing of the entire school community.

These are some of the changes / procedures that we will be adapting. They will be reviewed regularly and adapted / changed if & when needed.

1. **New Class Groupings**

As you have been already informed, we have rearranged class groupings to maximise physical distancing between children.

The New Class Groupings are as follows:

1st/ 2nd class………Mrs. Linehan

3rd class……………Miss McLoughlin(In old prefab)

4th class…………. Miss Hickey

5th class………Mrs. Boyce

6th class………. Mrs. O’Sullivan

1. **Staggered Opening & Closing Times**

Sadly, the days of children coming to school early in the morning and assembling or hanging around in the school yard before school are gone.

To facilitate this arrangement, we are staggering the opening and closing times for each class.

***Staggered Opening Times:***

Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival.

**8.50am:4th/5th Classes**

4th enter school via Main Door - 5th enter via Side Gate (Wheelchair access to side Prefab)

**9.00am: 1st/2nd Classes**

Enter via Main Door

**9.10am: 6th/3rd Classes**

6th enter via Main Door - 3rd enter via large school gate (3rd Class Classroom in old prefab in main yard)

We are mindful of parents dropping off more than one child in the morning. If this is the case, you can choose one of the above times and we will accommodate all the children.

**Staggered Closing Times: -**

**2.30pm....4th/5th Classes**

**2.40pm....1st/2nd Classes**

**2.50pm....6th/3rd Classes**

Again, we will accommodate families with one collection time.

1. **Parent / Teacher Communications**

This year most of our communications with parents will be via emails & phone calls. It would be very important that your contact details are up to date.

1. **Visitors to the School**

In the interest of safety, **NO** visitors are allowed into the school.

* If your child forgets something for school there will be a **Drop off box** just inside the school gate where you can put these items. Please label these items clearly.
* If your child has an appointment andneeds to be collected from school early during the day, please inform us beforehand, buzz the front door and wait for child to exit the building.
* If your child is returning from an appointment, drop him at front door and he will be directed by a staff member to his class.

**5. Uniforms/Tracksuits**

We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms and tracksuits.

Uniforms should be worn every day, except on P.E. days, or when otherwise requested by teachers.

On return to school, the class teacher will tell the class on what day they have PE.

**6. Contactless Payment System**

We hope to have a contactless payment system set up to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled.

Parents/Guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for contactless payments through the school office. More information will be issued on this later.

If not set up, or if this does not suit - parents will be asked to put their money in an envelope with Child’s name, date and indicating what they are paying for on the outside.

Receipts for payment will be issued within a week.

**7. Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines**

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in their class groupings.

The aim of the system within the school is that the children mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until they go home at the end of the school day.

**8. Visiting Teachers/Coaches**

There will be NO visiting teachers for Music, PE, Computers etc. in the first term.

Sadly, there will be no trips/ outings or blitzes either during this time.

We will review this at the end of Term 1.

9. **Children in High Risk Groups:**

Parents should seek advice from their GP/Specialist if they think their child is in a high-risk group. They must make an informed decision if it is safe for their child to return to school on August 31st.

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the Class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child’s learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians via emails and online learning platforms.

**10. Wellbeing of the School Community**

The Whole School Community will work on the recommended principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff.

These include promoting:

• A sense of safety

• A sense of calm

• A sense of belonging and connectedness to school

• A sense of hope

**11. Masks or Visors**

Staff members will be wearing Masks or/and Visors in the classrooms.

Children in Primary Schools are not required to wear masks or face coverings.

All adults must wear a mask and/or Visor if entering the school grounds.

**12. Hygiene and Cleaning**

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

We ask for children to also have their own small bottle of hand sanitiser and tissues in a zip lock bag.

Hand sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school.

Water and soap arereadily available in all the classrooms & toilets.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

**13. What your Child needs in school**

* Hand Sanitiser & Tissues in a clear ziplocked bag. (Labelled)
* Books , Copies & a fully equipped Pencil Case – everything clearly labelled as sharing of equipment will not be allowed. Please check pencil case and school bag every night.
* A raincoat – not a hoody as we plan to be out in most weather conditions.

**14. If your Child is ill**

If your child is ill, please DO NOT SEND them to school.

In the current climate if a child presents unwell at school, he will be immediately sent home. Please ensure that there will always be somebody available to collect your child as quickly as possible. Also ensure that your contact details are always kept up to date.

While waiting to be collected the child will be sent and observed in the sick –bay area.

**The most common symptoms of Covid 19 are:**

* Cough - this can be any kind of cough, usually dry but not always
* Fever - high temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
* Shortness of Breath
* Breathing Difficulties
* Lack of smell.

As a school we will be required to isolate any pupil displaying symptoms until they are taken home. We have a responsibility to all of our pupils and to all adults working in our school, to maintain the school as a Covid-19 free zone.

Please do not take offence should your child need to be in isolation. Rest assured that in the event of this being necessary, it will be undertaken sensibly, sensitively and with a total absence of any fear factor.

All actions taken are in the interests of keeping everybody in our school safe and well.

**15. If there is a Confirmed case of COVID-19 in school.**

* Please do not send your child to school if they have been in contact with a Positive Covid 19 Case and follow the appropriate HSE Guidelines.
* Please inform the school if your child has tested positive for Covid-19.
* The school will then contact the HSE to discuss the case. The HSE will identify people who have been in contact with the CHILD and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
* Advice on the management of children and staff who have come into contact with the person will be based on this assessment.
* At present, our understanding is that if a child in a class has Covid-19, the teacher and parents of fellow classmates will be immediately informed that there is a case in the class, sent home to isolate and wait for further advice from the HSE.

**16. Travelling Abroad**

The current Government advice is not to travel overseas.

Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List should not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period.

**17. Social Distancing**

Social distancing will be encouraged in school where possible.

Parents are also requested to adhere to social distancing guidelines at the beginning and end of the school day when dropping off or collecting pupils. In cases where parents are walking to school to collect children please remain outside, maintain social distance, and wear a mask/visor.

Please keep interactions with other parents to a minimum.

**18. Blended / Online Learning**

We do hope to engage in Blended Learning again this year – that is a mixture of the traditional teaching / learning and online learning. We plan to give online homework one day a week so that in the unlikely event of a further school closure all children will be familiar with the online platforms and the expectations of online learning.

These measures are not taken lightly and have at their very core the safety of our pupils, teachers and school personnel as being of paramount importance. We look forward to seeing everyone again and to welcome our children back to school for what will hopefully be a fruitful and productive school year.

We thank you most sincerely in advance for your continued support and more importantly, your cooperation. It is only by working together that we can control and ultimately eradicate the spread of Covid-19.

Should you have any questions, concerns or require further information please do not hesitate to contact the school either by telephone or by email.

We will do our level best to address any issues.

Kind Regards,

Eilish Finnegan, Principal

Fr. John Magner, Chairperson B.O.M.