Dear Parent / Guardian, Staff Member,

**RE: Re-opening of St. Colmans Boys School**

I hope you and your families are keeping well.

As you are aware, our school has now been closed since 12th March due to the COVID-19 situation. We are preparing to re-open our school safely, in line with current guidance and recommendations.

Re-opening the school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our School Community – BoM, School Leadership, Staff, Parents and Pupils. We will all be called on to play our part in ensuring that re-opening of the school is done in a safe manner which prevents the spread of the virus and allows the vital work of Teaching and Learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible.

**RE: Physical Distancing and Safe School Attendance**

We are currently working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much Physical Distancing as is possible in our building. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way. To facilitate this in our school and to ensure the safety of everybody we have re-arranged our class groupings as follows:

1st/ 2nd class………Mrs. Linehan

3rd class……………Miss McLoughlin

4th class………….Miss Hickey

5 th class………Mrs. Boyce

6th class……….Mrs. O’Sullivan

**Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -**

***Increasing Separation*.** This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different classes / bubbles. Within the classes / bubbles , children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the class/ bubble, or classroom.

***Decreasing Interaction***. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different classes/bubbles to interact. There will be marked routes for various classes/bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms .Classes/ bubbles will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the playground. We will make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that, where children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents asked to collect them from the school.

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

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Teachers will make children aware of the proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home as part of the preparation for returning to school.

Our aim remains to re-open the school in an orderly safe manner, while reassuring the children and making them feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends in the new school environment. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal.

We are currently working on drop- off / collection plans and some slight alterations to booklists. We will keep you informed as soon as we have the arrangements finalised.

The Government has published documentation on the safe re-opening of schools. You may access this information on our school website from next week on and also view our school Covid- Policy Statement .

We are really looking forward to welcoming our children back to school and will be doing all that we can to ensure that the return to school is a safe and enjoyable experience for the children. We will be in touch with you again with further updates on the reopening of our school.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Kind Regards,

Eilish Finnegan, Principal

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

The following websites provide further information on COVID-19 and on government advice and recommendations regarding the re-opening of schools: -

* <https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/>
* <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
* <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool/>