



Loreto Secondary School

Bray, Co. Wicklow. Telephone 01 2867481 Fax 01 2867481
info@loretobray.com www.loretobray.com

21st August 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

Since the publication, by the Department of Education and Skills, of “The Roadmap for the Full Return to School”, intensive preparations have been taking place in Loreto Secondary School, Bray for the reopening of our school.

These preparations involve a series of practical measures which the school has implemented to minimise the risk of infection while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time.

Our preparations are ongoing and are subject to constant review as we strive to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school in the first place while also having in place measures designed to reduce the spread of infection if it is brought into the school.

A summary of these measures is provided below as well as an indication of how parents and students can help in our efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Raughter
Principal

What are we doing to help protect students and staff?

Classroom Layout

Classrooms and other areas of the school have been re-configured to support physical distancing in line with the official guidance. Desks have been placed 1m apart and 2m from the teacher's desk. Where a class size is greater than the optimum number for that classroom, students will be sent on a rotational basis to a supervised area of the school.

Hand Hygiene

Hand sanitising units have been placed in every classroom and corridor and at every entry and exit point.

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all bathrooms. Our plumbing system only supplies cold water and therefore a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water will be used.

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins will be managed so as to avoid congregation of students waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

Students will be asked to perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- On entering a classroom;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After being outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;
- When they cough or sneeze.

Respiratory Hygiene

Students will be encouraged to follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze and then disposing of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.

Face coverings

It is the requirement that teachers, staff and all students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

In certain situations, the use of clear visors may be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of 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.

When not in use the masks will need to be kept in a sealed plastic bag.

Physical Distancing

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

1. Increasing separation
2. Decreasing interaction

1. Increasing separation

- The school has reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing:
 - Each classroom has been measured,
 - Lockers have been removed from classrooms 1-10,
 - Student desks have been arranged to ensure 1m physical distance between students,
 - Teacher desks have been arranged to ensure 2m physical distance between teachers and students,
- Where the number of students in a class exceeds the number of desks available, excess students will be sent to a designated supervised area. Further details will be provided upon return to school;
- The school is utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing;
- Timetables have been reviewed
 - A model of student based classrooms has been implemented
 - Rooming has been adapted to create specific zones for each year group to minimise mixing;
- Classes have been reconfigured where possible:
 - Supervision areas have been created;
 - The Sports Hall has been repurposed to be used as a large supervision space for students;
- The school will utilise the Sports Hall as an overflow and supervision space, and community rental of the space has been suspended.

2. Decreasing interaction

As far as possible and practical, students will remain in the same classroom for most subjects and teachers will move between rooms. Designated zones and areas of the school have been created for each year group to reduce the amount of mixing between different groups of students.

Designated entry/exit points and specific movement plans (e.g. One-Way systems) will be employed to reduce congestion in specific areas of the school. Full details of these measures will be communicated to students when they receive their timetable.

One-way systems and movement plans will also be implemented to ensure quick movement between classes, reduce congestion in corridors and other areas and to minimise contact between different groups of students.

Where students have an option subject they will move quickly into the new class and will be seated with members of their class cohort, observing at least 1m distance.

Where possible and practical, double classes have been planned to minimise movement during the day.

Hand sanitising will be required when moving between classes by teachers and students.

Classrooms have been configured to ensure 2m physical distance between teachers and students. Guidance regarding physical distancing between SNAs and students has also been issued and will be adhered to in the classroom setting.

Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) is not permitted.

The water fountains will not be in use. Students must bring their own water with them daily.

Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device will be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Arrival to school

Walking/cycling to school will be encouraged as much as possible.

The school building will not be open to students until 8.15am. Upon entry to the school building, students will go straight to their first classroom.

To accommodate students who, for transport reasons, arrive in school early (i.e. 7.30am), supervision will be available in the Sports Hall between 7.30am and 8.15am each morning. Students who wish to avail of this must sign up in advance, and arrive punctually.

Vigilant supervision arrangements will be in place in the morning to supervise students on their arrival to school.

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

Designated entry/exit points and specific movement plans (e.g. One-Way systems) will be employed to reduce congestion in specific areas of the school. Full details of these measures will be communicated to students when they receive their timetable.

Lockers

There will be no student lockers this year. Arrangements will be put in place to limit the number of books students must bring to school on a daily basis.

Uniform

Students must wear their full school uniform to school every day. The school jacket is probably needed more than ever as we will be encouraging as much fresh air experience as possible.

On a day when a student has PE, she must wear her PE tracksuit to school for the day. Students will not have access to changing rooms.

After school and lunchtime activities

After school and lunchtime activities (study, sports, etc.) will not take place. Students must leave the building and grounds promptly at the end of day.

Signage

Signage has been displayed outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and supporting good hand and respiratory hygiene. Signage has been displayed in prominent areas such as classrooms, corridors, toilets etc.

Dealing with a suspected case

Any student who displays symptoms during the school-day should immediately inform a member of staff where they will be promptly brought to an isolation room.

Parents/Guardians will be contacted to collect their daughter immediately. All contact details provided for the students must be up to date before the school reopens. All students must have at least one contact available at all times. On entry to the school grounds, parents/guardians should ring the school office to notify of their arrival, where their daughter will be brought to them in the carpark.

Visitor Restrictions

Visits to the school by parents and others will be restricted to essential* purposes only and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.

*An example of an essential purpose is to bring an ill student home. Dropping in something a student has forgotten to bring is not an essential purpose and is therefore not permitted.

Cleaning

The school will be cleaned at least once per day. Additional cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

The product 'Steri-7 Extra High Level Disinfectant' will be utilised as an additional cleaning measure. This is a bio-misting service that covers 100% of the room and lasts for seven days, leaving a reactive barrier on surfaces that reactivates to kill any virus it comes into contact with in that time. It is scientifically proven to kill both airborne and surface viruses.

In addition, personal responsibility for good practice will be promoted, for example when students move from one classroom to another, they will be directed to clean their desk with materials provided.

Parents – How can you help?

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread.

Parents must not send their daughter(s) to school if they have any of the Covid-19 symptoms. They should instead phone their doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.

Parents must not send their daughter(s) to school if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.

Communication with the school should be online or over the phone as much as possible. Correspondence/Forms which need to be signed should be left in the letterbox outside the entrance at reception

It might be wise to ensure that your daughter carries with her a personal Covid-19 prevention pack containing hand sanitiser, a spare mask etc.

It is advisable to cover books and copies with a plastic covering that can be wiped clean.

Please ensure that you provide the school with the names and phone numbers of at least two contact people who can be called to collect your daughter if she displays the symptoms of Covid-19 while in school.