**To: All Parents, Guardians, Students and Staff**

11th March 2020

**Re: Contingency Plan in the event of a COVID-19 school closure**

A Chairde,

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus that can cause illness affecting the lungs and airways. The Board of Management of St Dominic’s College has obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 to ensure the safety and welfare of staff at work. We also have a duty of care to all of our students. As Principal, I take these responsibilities exceptionally seriously. In the first instance, the whole school community should follow the guidance set out by the HSE and/or their doctor(s).

**There are no cases – or suspected cases – of COVID-19 in St Dominic’s College, and the school remains open as normal unless directed to close by the HSE. This is the case for schools across the country.**

A public health doctor will ask you to self-isolate if they think you or your child may have coronavirus. This could be before you get tested for coronavirus or while you wait for test results. You will be asked to engage in limited social interaction. Limited social interaction is avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. You may need to do this if you are a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus. This is to stop other people from getting it, if you develop symptoms. The HSE sets out the criteria for self-isolation at:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/self-isolation-and-limited-social-interaction.html>

The current HSE advice is that it can take 14 days from exposure to COVID-19 for the symptoms to appear.

**In terms of hygiene in our school:**

* All student and staff toilets have soap, and are cleaned daily
* All washable floors are being cleaned using suitable grade materials.
* All door handles are disinfected each day.
* All students and staff have access to alcohol-based sanitiser gel.
* There are cleaning materials in the computer rooms and classrooms.
* All of our ancillary staff are working exceptionally hard to ensure the general cleanliness of our school is maintained.
* Our admin staff have downloaded all information from the HSE including laminating posters about the virus and hygiene.
* Everyone in the school has been asked to wash their hands properly: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

I would like to share with you our contingency plan for Teaching and Learning in the event of a school closure. Whilst we don’t know how things will develop, it is important to be as prepared as possible in these exceptional times. We are following **all** national advice and liaising with the appropriate authorities on a **daily** basis.

**We have a plan to maintain Teaching and Learning in the event of a school building closure:**

* The day-to-day practicalities have been reiterated to the students during assemblies and over the intercom each day.
* Students have been advised to bring home study materials, especially those in exam years. In the event of a sudden school closure I will open the school for students to collect books for a short period of time the following morning. You will be advised of times for this in the event of this happening. The only exception to this would be if we were directed by the HSE not to open the school.
* All students have been supplied with school email addresses for school business. Students should be prepared to receive and return work via their school email. It is the responsibility of all students to check their school email accounts for school work from their teachers.
* We would ask students to be respectful of the times they contact the teaching staff, i.e. within school hours (09:00hrs –15.40/15.00 hrs.)
* The State Examinations Commission will direct us on the timing of the State Exam projects and orals. This information will be immediately communicated to parents, guardians and students by text message. If you have recently changed your contact details please inform the school office as soon as possible.
* Some teachers have a Google Classroom account, can add students, assign work, share materials, create assignments and send feedback

**You as Parents are required to:**

* Keep updated on advice issuing from the HSE, The Department of education and Skills and the School.
* Provide personal sanitizers for your daughter to compliment what the school can provide if you have access to them.
* Inform the school if your child has been to any of the infected areas in the last 14 days
* Keep your daughter at home if she exhibits flu like symptoms
* Respond immediately to any call from the school (this is the usual procedure in the event of your child becoming ill)

**Symptoms of Coronavirus**

* Cough
* Shortness of Breath
* Breathing Difficulties
* Fever

If your daughter exhibits any of the above contact your G.P.

In view of recent developments and to look after the health and welfare of those involved in the school, the Board of Management will review the foreign trip to Bratislava in May. They will follow best advice from the relevant authorities/agencies in the run up to the trip. The school will be contacting teachers, parents and students to get feedback and make an informed decision.

I will be in touch via text, letter and/or email to all stakeholders with any further information. In the meantime, we will keep organised and focussed, knowing that our primary duty is to serve our students in a safe and clean school.

Le gach dea-ghuí,



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**Ann Cameron**

Principal