



# ST. DOMINIC'S COLLEGE

CABRA, DUBLIN 7

TEL: 01-8385282 / 8387218 / 8823994 FAX: 01-8683003

E-mail: [info@stdominics.ie](mailto:info@stdominics.ie) Website: [www.stdominics.ie](http://www.stdominics.ie) 60731F

## Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you and your families are well. I am really delighted to be writing to you on the wonderful occasion that schools are reopening. We all hope and pray that the environment in which we live will continue to be safe enough to allow schools all over Ireland to open up and do what we do best in delivering quality teaching and learning to our wonderful students. We are really excited about getting back to school and seeing each and every one of our students walk back in through the doors to have a happy year. We look forward to welcoming our first year students to St Dominic's College for the first time and hope that they will be very happy here as many thousands of students have been down through the years. We missed school life very much. From all the emails and messages of support over the last six months that I received, I know you and your daughters have missed it too!

I am sorry that this letter is so long but there is so much important information to communicate to you that it is unavoidable. This communicate contains important information regarding protocols around school reopening.

## Support for Parents

It is vital that we have your cooperation at all times when we reopen. We understand too that you may have questions and we are more than happy to provide you with the following email addresses to help support and provide you with the information you want. Please do not hesitate to contact one of the following staff members on the list below. They will refer your email to the relevant person to help you.

School office number is 01838582

Elise, Main Office, School Secretary: [oneill@stdominics.ie](mailto:oneill@stdominics.ie)

Melissa, School Secretary: [mmacken@stdominics.ie](mailto:mmacken@stdominics.ie)

Karen, Accounts Office: [accounts@stdominics.ie](mailto:accounts@stdominics.ie)

## Reopening of Schools

The Roadmap for School Reopening, published by the Government on the 27th July and available on their website, provides support to schools, allowing for reopening in, as safe a manner, as possible. It is important to remember that unfortunately, there is no zero-risk solution to returning to school in an active pandemic and it will require our collective efforts to minimise risks as much as possible.

We have drawn up protocols, we have our COVID-19 Response Plan and we will be observing Public Health advice measures. It is vital that you remember the following will help in reducing the spread of infection:

- Washing hands regularly
- Maintaining physical distancing
- Following respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette guidelines
- Maintaining environmental hygiene

A collective effort on the part of the entire school community will be necessary as we endeavour to keep our school COVID free. As this is a dynamic situation, advice from the Department and Managerial Bodies is ongoing.

In line with guidance in relation to school opening, we have been working on the following:

- Creating more space in classrooms and corridors
- Removing excess furniture from classrooms
- Creating more outdoor space for students
- Providing an isolation facility if there is a suspected case in the school
- Enhancing cleaning regimes
- Developing strict visitor guidelines and contact tracing
- Developing comprehensive COVID-19 protocols

## **Covid 19**

Firstly, we are working day and night to ensure that our school will reopen as a safe place for students. Government, HSE, Department of Education and our Managerial Bodies have all issued advice and we are following all advice and guidelines. We know that it is not possible to have a totally safe environment until a vaccine is introduced. However, until then we must all live and work doing our very best to be careful and abide by the guidelines.

It will require responsibility and great maturity on behalf of our students to follow all we have put in place. Any attempt to deviate from following new and existing school rules will be dealt with by the school Code of Behaviour as usual. Any attempt to deviate from following Covid rules will result in parents/guardians being phoned and asked to remove the student from the building with immediate effect. We do not anticipate this happening as our students know how to treat each other and all members of the school community with respect.

Students should not be sent to school if they are unwell or have had Covid 19 in the last two weeks. Under no circumstances should any student who has travelled abroad come to school until they have fulfilled the 14-day quarantine period.

## School Reopening Protocol

School will begin for students as per the schedule below.

Year Group	Day of return	Date of return	Start time	Finish time	What is needed?
1 <sup>st</sup> years	Fri	28 <sup>th</sup> Aug	10.45am	1.15pm	In full uniform, Pen+note book
2 <sup>nd</sup> years	Thurs	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	10.45am	12.15pm	In full uniform, pen+notebook Attendance Swipe card
3 <sup>rd</sup> years	Tues	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept	10.45am	12.15pm	In full uniform, pen+notebook Attendance Swipe card
TY	Fri	4 <sup>th</sup> Sept	10.45am	12.15pm	In full uniform, pen+notebook Attendance Swipe card
5 <sup>th</sup> years	Wed	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sept	10.45am	12.15pm	In full uniform, pen+notebook Attendance Swipe card
6 <sup>th</sup> years	Mon	31 <sup>st</sup> Aug	10.45am	12.15pm	In full uniform, pen+notebook Attendance Swipe card

Each year group will follow the same procedure on entrance to the school.

1. Each year group will return on a separate day in line with advice given to us by our managerial body
2. Students will enter through the student entrance on one side and register with the Admin staff. We ask students to bring their *Attendance Swipe Card* in on that day. First years will be given their card on their first day.
3. Students will have a socially distanced assembly outdoors in the courtyard weather permitting, or indoors in our very large Library spaced 1m apart with their year group to meet their Year Head, Tutors, Deputy Principals and Principal.
4. They will then proceed to smaller class groups where they will be seated 1 metre apart to go through Covid safety protocols in our school with their tutors. This session will communicate the school's expectations around safety protocols that we have put in place.
5. A full teaching school day will begin for all on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

In order to help us have a smooth start to the year, we ask that students come to school ready with their books, copies, stationary, uniform in perfect condition and PE uniform ready for PE class.

Students are expected to be in full uniform including black or navy leather shoes (not canvas shoes).

Unnatural coloured hair is not permitted in the school. Please be aware of the jewellery, make-up, nail varnish and mobile phone rules. Our Code of Behaviour is on the school website [www.stdominics.ie](http://www.stdominics.ie) and also in the school journal.

The year heads will allocate lockers, journals, earphones and other student supplies to students that we have received payment for. Please make sure that your daughter has a lock for her locker as the school cannot be responsible for items left in open lockers.

### Further Information

Some other information below will help you with the back to school system:

- The school will provide a visor to all students on their first day back. If this is lost or misplaced a student will be required to replace it. A student may also bring in 2 or 3 face masks each day to school but it can be difficult to spend a full day in a face mask so we have supplied a visor. Face masks become ineffective after 4 hours so a few changes of face masks is advisable. The used ones must go home in a sealed bag to be washed. It would be a good

idea if parents supplied a dozen face masks for their daughters which can be stored in their lockers. We will give clear instructions to the students about the visors as they should remain in school and not be taken home. Masks or visors can be worn in school. Parents will be asked to collect any student from school who is not wearing the visor or face mask.

- Extra hand sanitisers have been placed all around the school campus.
- Extra bins have been placed around the school.
- Any books or items of clothing left lying around the school after 3.40pm will have to be discarded to allow for a good cleaning system
- A one way walking system has been put in place so that face to face contact around the school can be minimized. Students are required to follow the route.
- Students will be permitted to access their lockers in the morning, once during the day at a designated time and as they exit the building as school bags and books are heavy. Students may leave their jackets in their lockers during the day. There will be instructions around locker use to avoid crowding at locker areas.
- The school is undergoing a deep cleaning at present.
- Covid signage is all over the school.
- We have hired extra teaching staff, extra supervisors and extra cleaning staff.
- I remind students that chewing gum is not permitted in the school. It is unhygienic and we require all students to adhere strictly to this rule to decrease the spread of germs.
- Water fountains will not be in use until this period of Covid ends. The school food company will sell small bottles of water for a period of time until it is safe to resume using water fountains. We regret having to reintroduce plastic water bottles but we have negotiated that the ones being brought in are more biodegradable than in previous years. We will revert to having no plastic bottles once this Covid Period is over.
- Extra outdoor benches have been purchased for the red courtyard.
- Work has started on the creation of a second courtyard for students' use and benches have been purchased for this too.
- **Students are asked to bring a packet of wipes, a small hand sanitiser, several face masks and a small hand towel for drying their hands in the student toilets/bathrooms in their own school bag each day. This will be checked on their first day.**
- Classroom doors will remain open, as will windows when possible to increase the ventilation.
- Tables will be at a 1 metre distance apart in almost all situations. If at any occasion this does not occur the students would be instructed to wear their face masks/visors on that occasion,
- We will continue to teach and learn in teacher based classrooms. When travelling on the corridors it is mandatory to wear their visor or face mask.
- We have made changes to where students will eat their lunch and we will let each group know on the day of their induction and Covid 19 training where this will be.
- Supervised study will go ahead as we know parents and students are keen for students to get down to hard work as soon as possible. Study desks will be spaced 1m apart always. Forms will be available on the day of their induction and study will begin on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September. Study is open to all year groups and runs for two/three hours each day after school finishes. Complimentary tea, coffee, hot chocolate and biscuits are provided so that no student goes into the study hall hungry.
- The canteen will provide food for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> years as is tradition in the school. However, if possible it would help with queuing if as many students as possible brought in a packed lunch when they can. All 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years must take a packed lunch to school as is custom in the school already as space does not allow any more students to access the canteen.
- A limited menu will be available to speed up the lunch time queue.
- PE classes will go ahead as advised. Attention to social distancing will be a priority but during games, we have been advised that normal game play may take place.

- Information regarding Transition year and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) will be forthcoming.

## **Positive attitude to school work and home work**

- In the event of any further closure or inability to hold large Christmas and Summer exams, all assessment may be based on students' continuous work over the 9 months. It is very important that your daughter attends schools each day unless unwell, so that she does not fall behind with her school work. It is important from the first day of school that your daughter develops good study habits. Further advice on good study habits will be issued by tutors and year heads throughout the school year.
- Students must be ready now to engage with school work and home work. It is not acceptable to avoid school or home work now that we have been lucky enough to get back to school. We ask for your support with this.
- Please ask your daughter to check her school email each day for updates we will send.
- We ask you to consider purchasing a device for your daughter which may be used in the event that schools have further closures. Using mobile phones is not satisfactory to access school information and carry out school assignments. The school will research the cost of these devices and send you information on suitable and good value devices.
- We have been working hard over recent weeks to ensure that you return to as safe a school as possible under the circumstances. Much of this requires your co-operation and support. Students will be informed of what is expected of them and we will continue to work on keeping them safe in St. Dominic's. We want to spend our time on this without distraction and therefore expect that all students adhere to the protocols in place and to our Code of Behaviour. Our first reminder is to the students to ensure that they, on return, fully comply with our uniform code which means wearing the full correct uniform and jacket and not wearing any false nails, eyelashes, hair colouring etc. We ask you to have this important conversation with your daughters about the expectations of the school. We need this cooperation if we are to do all we have to do over the next few weeks and months as our focus must be on safety and teaching and learning.

## **Online internet safety**

We remind parents/guardians and students of the dangers of incorrect or careless online activity. We do not tolerate inappropriate online behaviour which aims to harass and intimidate other people as this causes extreme distress. Parents/Guardians should be aware of your daughter's online and texting/social media activity at all times. Photographs of other people should never be posted without their permission.

## **Main School Office**

- Elise O Neill is the school secretary in the main office. She may be contacted on [info@stdominics.ie](mailto:info@stdominics.ie)
- We have to limit visitors to the school for health and safety reasons. Please do not come up during the day to ask for your daughter to leave school. Admin staff may not be always able to leave the office to arrange for your daughter to be brought to the office. There may be a delay to you of up to 30 minutes so please avoid coming to the school at all or taking your daughters out unless totally unavoidable for emergencies. Dentist, doctor or other such appointments should be arranged for after school. Schools ends three days of the week at 3pm. Never text your daughter and arrange for her to meet you at the school office. Any student who accesses a text message will have her phone confiscated and be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.

- If you have changed your mobile numbers, email addresses or home addresses please contact Melissa in the office or email [mmacken@stdominics.ie](mailto:mmacken@stdominics.ie) to inform her. It is essential now more than ever that we have accurate contact details. We rely on you to answer any calls from the school especially now in light of Covid sickness that may arise.
- We ask you **not** to text your daughter in school time. Phones **MAY NOT** be used under any circumstances during the school day. Phones must be switched off before students enter the school building and may not be switched on again until they leave school. If a student uses her phone to call or text anyone the phone will be confiscated and a parent/guardian will be required to come to the school between 4pm and 4.30pm **ONLY** to collect the phone. Inappropriate use of the phone or cyber bullying may incur a far more severe penalty up to and including confiscation of the phone and suspension.
- Please contact your daughter's year head for all help through the main office at [info@stdominics.ie](mailto:info@stdominics.ie) for any help or support you might require. Your message will then be sent to the relevant person. Please remember that year heads have full teaching timetables and therefore may not be able to get back to you immediately.

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Year Head</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> year	Ms McCarthy
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	Ms Doddy
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Ms Feighery
4 <sup>th</sup> year	Ms Murtagh
5 <sup>th</sup> year	Ms McGarry
6 <sup>th</sup> year	Ms O Byrne
Transition year coordinator	Ms Branigan
Leaving Certificate applied coordinator	Ms McBrearty


- There are a small number of outstanding payments for school services. The school will be open each day from this date between **10am-12 noon Monday to Friday until August 28<sup>th</sup>** to facilitate payment. A big thank you to all parents who have paid this since last April on. Payments can be made by bank transfer, by debit card over the phone on **01 385282**, or in person in the school by debit card or cash. If you have any questions please email [accounts@stdominics.ie](mailto:accounts@stdominics.ie) or [info@stdominics.ie](mailto:info@stdominics.ie)
- Finally, we were asked to delay sending our school information for as long as possible due to the uncertainty of the Covid 19 situation. This information is accurate as of this morning. However, we are aware of meetings between NPHE , the Government Sub Committee and the Department of Education. Please keep an eye on your email account and we will brief you if there are any changes. Many opinions and rumours are going around but check in with your school email updates and we will keep you posted.

## School Community

Thank you to each and every one of you for all your support to the school over the last few months. It meant so much to us. We will keep in touch with you over the next few weeks with regular updates.

*Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid-* Together, supporting each other we will come through this.

All the best to you on behalf of the Management team, Ms Largey and Mr McBride and the Board of Management



Ms Ann Cameron

Principal

