



**Loreto Secondary School,
Pembroke Hill,
Ballynagee,
Wexford.**

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Office hours: 7.45 a.m. to 4.15 p.m., Monday to Friday

Friday, 31 July 2020

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I wish to provide you with the following information as we begin the process of preparing for a full return to school in the week beginning Monday, 31 August 2020.

Communication

I shall issue a letter to families each Friday over the coming weeks to provide you with a range of information as the return to school approaches.

I draw your attention to the detailed documentation published this week by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in relation to the re-opening of schools. Simply go to gov.ie/backtoschool to access these documents. I ask you to view the Roadmap document in particular.

Between now and Friday, 7 August, the school office will be open for telephone enquiries each weekday from 09.00 to 13.00. Normal office hours – 07.45 to 16.15 weekdays – will resume on Monday, 10 August.

The Deputy Principals – Ms. O’ Reilly and Mr. McGinnity – and I will be happy to deal with any questions from parents and students as we prepare for re-opening. Feel free to email us at the addresses below and we will deal with your individual question as quickly as possible.

principal@loretowexford.com
deputyoreilly@loretowexford.com
deputymcginnity@loretowexford.com

Return to School

All students are asked to attend Introduction Meetings in the Sports Hall, as follows:

Tuesday, 1 September	3 rd year students	14.00 – 15.30
Wednesday, 2 September	2 nd year students	09.00 – 10.30
	5 th year students	11.00 – 12.30
	6 th year students	14.00 – 15.30
Thursday, 3 September	1 st year students – meeting followed by classes	09.00 – 15.25
	4 th year students	11.00 – 12.30

The full timetable for all year groups will operate from 08.50 on Friday, 4 September.

Introduction meetings will deal with the new arrangements relating to Covid-19 as well as the normal matters pertaining to the start of a new school year. Students will not require books, copies or other materials for these meetings.

1st year students attending on Thursday, 3 September need only bring a copy and pen as well as their lunch. They will not need their books or copies on this day.

School uniform should be worn at all introduction meetings.

The school calendar for the year will be updated as necessary and posted to the website.

Guiding Principles

I think it is fair to say that all of us will approach the re-opening of school with a mix of emotions. There will be the joy of re-connecting with friends and colleagues in person and of getting into a welcome sense of routine and clear purpose. At the back of all minds, however, will be the need to be cautious.

Five guiding principles will point the way in our school in the coming weeks and months, as follows:

A sense of safety

Staff members and I will be working hard in the coming weeks to put in place as many safety measures as possible for both students and staff. We will be taking our lead from the documentation provided by DES. Upcoming letters to families will keep you informed of these measures as they unfold in the next few weeks.

A sense of calm

It is expected that most students will adapt quickly to the return to school. Some will require additional support and a few will need considerably more. Our intention is to support all in a calm and measured manner and to avoid the creation of an anxious school environment. As stated in a previous letter to families, I look forward so much to the sound and sight of our students once again going about their lives with fun, care for each other and diligence as they re-commence their studies.

A sense of belonging and connectedness

Having been apart since 11 March last, our school community of 840 students and nearly 70 staff will finally come together in the week beginning Monday, 31 August. Staying in touch from 12 March last by remote means was not easy. Many were simply unable to do so. The staff and I will be working diligently to develop a sense of school togetherness once again as the new term commences, albeit with due regard to public safety measures.

A sense of self and school community efficacy

Every single person entering Loreto, Wexford from Monday, 31 August has both an individual and collective responsibility to do the right thing to achieve two key aims – firstly, to keep Covid-19 out of the school and then, secondly, to take certain actions to minimise its spread in the event that the virus does enter the school. Accordingly, the following measures will be crucial for all of us:

- Frequent hand-washing/sanitisation
- Maintaining a minimum of 1 metre distance between everyone to the greatest extent possible
- Practising proper respiratory etiquette
- Maintaining a hygienic school environment
- Wearing face coverings/visors when and where required
- Staying away from school if unwell
- Not being abroad in the 14 day period prior to the return to school

You will hear a lot more about these measures as the re-opening approaches.

A sense of hope

Thankfully, our country has come a long way since the dark and worrying days of last March, April and May in particular. The country has displayed great solidarity to get to the stage of being able to re-open society, the economy and our schools. We now take the next steps in the hope that we will continue to pull together as a country as we work to deal with the real threats posed by Covid-19.

I shall write to you again next Friday with further updates.

Kind regards,

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.