



# Loreto Secondary School

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Office hours: 7.45am to 4.15pm Monday to Friday

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Dear parents/guardians and students,

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) issued Information Note SD 0003/2022 to all schools yesterday.

The communication makes the following points in relation to Covid measures in schools with effect from Monday, 28 February 2022:

- The Government has accepted the recommendations of NPHE to remove remaining restrictions relating to mask-wearing and physical distancing in schools.
- If members of staff or students wish to continue wearing face masks or coverings, they may do so on a personal basis.
- Continued use of good infection prevention and control measures such as hand washing, respiratory hygiene and ventilation is advised.
- The need to self-isolate if symptomatic (even if fully vaccinated/boosted) or if having a positive Covid test will continue to apply. If infection is not introduced, it cannot be spread in schools.
- Schools should now resume normal routine and teaching and learning activities.
- The wearing of face masks or coverings on school transport will no longer be mandatory but will continue to be advised. Existing hygiene measures and pre-assigned seating will remain in place subject to further review.
- Use of changing rooms, PE halls, lockers and staff rooms can resume.
- There is no longer a requirement to restrict visitors to schools.
- Schools will no longer require a Return to Work or a Return to School Form from staff and students after holiday or break periods.

In relation to our school, I wish to advise you as follows:

- As been the case throughout the past two years, the school will comply in full with Government decisions.
- Classrooms will be restored to their pre-Covid configuration in the coming days and weeks and protective screens will gradually be removed where deemed prudent.
- As arrangements for an online 2<sup>nd</sup> year parent-teacher meeting are already at an advanced stage, this meeting will proceed in an online format on Wednesday, 2 March from 16.15 to 18.45. Schedule details will be emailed to 2<sup>nd</sup> year families early next week.
- The timetable that we have operated since last September, incorporating staggered morning and lunch breaks, will continue for the time being pending consultation with staff and students, prior to a Board of Management decision on the matter, in the coming weeks.
- I shall meet all students in year group assemblies next week to clarify any issues arising from these new measures and to outline the rationale behind, and contents of, our new school policy on mobile phones/devices that will come into force from Monday, 7 March. Details of this policy were emailed to all students last week.

As I conclude this letter, I think of the suffering and loss experienced by so many people over the past two years. I express my profound gratitude to all those who did so much to get us through this Covid pandemic and to everyone who made such great sacrifices in their personal and professional lives. In particular, I salute the world of science without whose determination and brilliance life-saving vaccinations, boosters and treatments would not have been possible. Whilst the pandemic is not over and we must continue to be vigilant, I can safely state that staff, students and parents will be more welcome than ever into a “normal” Loreto from next Monday.

Kind regards,

Billy O’ Shea,  
Principal.