

Reopening of Gallen Community School

Dear Parent,

As you are aware, our school has been closed since 12th March due to the COVID-19 situation. We are now planning to reopen our school safely on Friday August 28th for the return of our first group of pupils, in line with current guidance and recommendations.

Reopening the school safely will require the co-operation of all members of our School Community – Board of Management, school management, staff, parents and pupils. We will all be called upon to play our part in ensuring that the reopening of our school is done in a safe manner which prevents the spread of the virus and allows the vital work of teaching and learning to proceed with as little disruption as possible.

This letter informs you of the preparations and decisions made by the management of Gallen Community School to ensure the safe and sustained reopening of the school. We are aware that this letter may not address all of your questions however this is an ever changing situation and we will be updating you with more information as it becomes available. We wish to inform you that Gallen Community School Covid-19 policy and response plan will be available on the school website from Wednesday 26th August after being reviewed by our Board of Management.

In order to minimize the risks involved we believe it is very important that we have your full support and you reiterate to your son/daughter the importance of correct hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and social distancing. It is essential that your son/daughter follows all health and safety guidelines advised within the school. This includes informing a member of staff if they feel unwell during the school day.

It is critical to the sustained reopening of Gallen Community School that you:

- **Ensure your child completes their Covid Induction programme. School uniform to be worn on this day.**
- **Keep your son/daughter at home if they or a close contact is displaying Covid-19 symptoms, has tested positive for Covid-19 or is awaiting a Covid-19 test result.**
- **Keep your son/daughter at home if they have been advised to self-isolate.**
- **Keep your son/daughter at home if they have been abroad within the last 14 days.**
- **Inform the school office of any Covid-19 related issue that may impact the school community.**
- **Are available to collect your son/daughter if they develop any Covid-19 symptoms during the school day.**

In addition to the safety measures contained in the previous letter to you, the following additional safety measures are currently being implemented at Gallen Community School:

- **Entrance and Exit Points** – 1st, 2nd & 3rd Year students will continue to use the current student entrance, while all senior students will use the entrance towards the sports hall. Students will also use these doors to exit the school.
- **Canteen** – The school canteen will continue to operate but there will be reduced seating so as to allow for required social distancing.



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- An **isolation room** will be available to deal with a suspected case. Public Health advice will be followed in this regard. It is essential that parents are contactable and available to collect their child if they become unwell.
- **Dropping off items** at the school office by parents for their child will have to discontinue and the number of school visitors will be minimised. All meetings by Parents with School Management or Teachers must be by appointment only.
- All **discipline issues** relating to Covid-19 safety measures will be dealt with in accordance with our Code of Behaviour.
- **Hand sanitisers** – There will be hand sanitiser stations throughout the school campus.
- **Face Masks & Visors** – All students must supply their own face masks or visors and must be worn throughout the school.
- **Student Kit**- All students are asked to have their own hygiene Kit in a small Zip bag to include, hand sanitizers, Face Mask, small hand towel and tissues.
- **Social Distancing throughout the school** – All students must keep a minimum of 1-meter distance at all times. There can be no handshakes, high fives, hugging etc. We will be operating a minimum of 2-meter distance when students are eating in the canteen. These measures are in place to keep all members of the school community safe.
- **Toilets** – Toilets are limited to a prescribed number of students at any given time. These numbers are identified on the toilet doors. There can be no group gatherings in toilets.
- **Sharing of Personal items** – Students are prohibited from sharing any personal items such as pens, rulers, calculators, etc.
- **Cleaning of individual student seat and desk** - Students must clean their own chair and desk that they have been in contact with prior to swapping for option subjects during the day. The school will provide the necessary cleaning materials.
- **Safety guidelines** are still being compiled by the Department of Education and Skills for extracurricular activities and some subject areas, these arrangements will be communicated to parents as they become available.

It is essential that you discuss all of the above points with your son/daughter before they return to school.

We are really looking forward to welcoming our students back to school and will be doing all that we can to ensure that the return to school is a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone in our school community. This will be achieved by all of us working towards this common goal. We will be in touch again next week. I wish to once again thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Garrett Buckley
Principal