



St. Columba's College, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal.

Phone (074) 9131246 Fax (074) 9132528

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you and your family are enjoying the summer break.

We are looking forward to the beginning of another school year. Work is ongoing in the college to ensure that students and staff can return to a safe environment at the end of August and into September. Over the next week, we will be in contact with you regarding updated guidance and direction on the reopening of our school in line with Public Health advice and the Department of Education and Skills' advice. While we have been told to continue on with the measures that we had in place last year, we are awaiting further clarification from the Department in a number of areas.

Year groups will return to school in a phased manner to enable us to have a safe working and learning environment for staff and students. Students will return as follows:

Tuesday 24 th August:	Induction Programme for 1st Years
Wednesday 25 th August:	Induction Programme for 1st Years
Thursday 26 th August:	Induction Programme for 1st Years
Friday 27 th August:	Staff CPD Day
Monday 30 th August:	1st Years
Tuesday 31 st August:	5th Years, LCA 1 and Transition Years along with 1st Years
Wednesday September 1 st :	2nd Years along with 1st, 5th and Transition Years
Thursday September 2 nd :	3rd, 6th Years and LCA 2 along with 5th Years, Transition Year, LCA 1, 2nd Years and 1st Years
Friday September 3 rd :	Timetabled classes for all students

Information in relation to our Induction Programme was posted to parents of our incoming 1st Years at the beginning of August. Those who have opted for our Book Rental Scheme can collect and pay the deposit/rent of €100 for the books on the assigned evening during the Induction Programme. All other information and guidance, including our revised Covid 19 Response Plan, regarding the safe and sustainable reopening of schools for next term will be available on the homepage of our website at www.stcolumbascollege.ie. We are continuing with our strategy of student based classrooms for the new school year. Changes to the location of classrooms and other school routines will be explained to students on their return to school when they meet with their Class Tutor.

Some other measures that remain in place from last year includes the following:

Face Coverings: Students and staff will be required to wear a face mask as classes will be set up for 1 metre distancing. Any exceptions to this requirement will be outlined in our Covid Response Plan. Therefore, it is important that all staff and students carry a comfortable mask with them on return to school.

Attending classes: As mentioned above, students will be based in designated classrooms and assigned seats. Teachers will move between classrooms with students remaining in the same

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classroom for most of their classes, with the exception of attending specialist subjects such as Art, Music, Wood Technology, Engineering, etc. Year groups will be assigned classrooms in different zones in the college. A map of the zones/rooms assigned to the various year groups will be included in the our Covid Response Plan. Classrooms will be fully ventilated during break times and partially ventilated during class time.

School uniform: Students will be required to be in full uniform when attending school. However, to avoid students from having to use the changing rooms, students will be permitted to wear their PE gear to school on the day they are timetabled for PE (this is for PE day only). This will apply in the first term and will be reviewed.

Lockers: Your son/daughter will be allocated a locker at the beginning of the school year at a cost of €10. As students will be assigned to a base class, there will be less need for the students to go to their locker during the school day, therefore reducing congestion in these areas of the corridor.

Canteen: Canteen facilities will be available in the mornings, morning breaks and lunchtimes. Seating capacity has been reduced in the canteen. However, the breaks/lunchtimes will be staggered for Junior and Senior classes which will alleviate any issues that may arise. Students can bring their own snacks/lunch to ease queuing in the canteen. We strongly recommend that students do not go over the town at lunchtime to reduce issues of contact tracing.

Infirmary: We ask that students or staff who have any symptoms of the virus that they do not come to school and seek medical advice from their GP. Students who become ill at school will be facilitated in our infirmary/isolation room. Parents will be required to collect their son/daughter as soon as possible and seek medical advice from their GP.

Visits to the college: To reduce the risks to students, staff, parents and members of the public, we ask that all visits to the college to be by appointment only. Please contact the Principal/Deputy Principals to arrange an appointment in advance. All visitors must complete a contact tracing form.

A provisional calendar for the year will be posted on our website shortly. We will include provisional dates for Parent Teacher Meetings. Currently these meetings cannot take place face to face. However, the situation will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, in line with public health advice.

On the first day of reopening, students are greeted at the main gate and will be directed to their base classroom. It will not be possible to have the traditional year group Assembly. However, groups will meet with their Class Tutors and School Management and engage in an Induction Programme to ease themselves back into the school building, meet with their peers face-to-face, and reestablish school routines.

If you have any specific queries/concerns regarding your son/daughter, please do not hesitate to phone the office and a member of the school team will get back to you. Alternatively, please email any queries to admin@stcolumbasstranorlar.ie. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead and hope that your son/daughter has an enriching and safe experience in the months ahead.

Best regards,



Tom Rowan
Principal

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