



**Meanscoil na Toirbhirte**

**Lios Tuathail  
Co. Chiarraí**

**Presentation Secondary School**

**Listowel  
Co. Kerry**

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## **Parent Letter August 2020**

**10<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),**

I hope that you and your family are safe and well.

I am writing to you to renew contact with our school community. It has been a strange and challenging few months for everyone. We will work together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everybody.

We are very carefully planning for the reopening of the school to staff and students. There is a considerable amount of guidance available to schools and we are following all the protocols.

All the Documents relating to the Reopening of Schools are available on the school website

The Minister for Education has published 'The Roadmap for the Full Return to School'. We are at present making significant changes to the building, removing excess furniture, arranging classrooms to maximise social distancing, acquiring sanitisation stations, putting COVID awareness signage in place, creating student based classrooms and planning the orientation of both staff and students.

### **Zoom Audio Meetings with individual Year Group parents/guardians and students**

I will arrange a Zoom audio meeting next week, week of 17<sup>th</sup> August, with each year group to inform parents, guardians and students about the return to school protocols. I will be in contact with you regarding the specific date and time for your meeting in the coming days.

I wish to draw your attention to this section from the 'The Roadmap for the Full Return to School'

*What will schools be like when they reopen?*

*Schools will reopen for all students from the end of August.*

*While everyone wants schools to operate as normally as possible from August this year, it is recognised by all that it will be a different environment to how schools operated in March of this year.*

*Physical distancing, much less interaction between classes and class groups..... and a lot of flexibility within schools to maximise school spaces (including the use of GP Rooms as classrooms) will be a feature.*



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*Recognising that there will be a broad range of responses when the school community go back to school, ranging from children and their parents being happy and relieved to get back to school to some children being fearful and nervous, there will be specific emphasis on the well-being of the school community and our students and pupils as schools navigate through the reopening process.*

*Specific supports will be also be available for those children who struggle to come back to school, vulnerable groups and those children who may experience loss, grief and bereavement during the period of school closure.*

*A significant cultural shift in the behaviours of students, their families and staff is expected with each playing their roles in keeping the virus out of their school by ensuring*

- those who have symptoms or suspect they have the virus stay out of school,***
- by maintaining best practice in terms of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette in school*
- by minimising social contacts and respecting physical distancing practices.*

*As part of the school re-opening process, extensive communication by the school with the school community on the specific arrangements that will apply in the school is expected to support their cultural shift.*

*Reopening our schools is not just a matter of achieving a certain minimum physical distancing.*

*It is also about getting students re-engaged fully with learning, socialising with their peers, and for some preparing for examinations, for others transitioning to school life or a different level in terms of moving from primary to post-primary.*

*Students will need the support of their families, teachers and school staff in readjusting to school life and physical learning environments again. Roadmap for Full Return to Schools*

***What we can all do to protect ourselves and each other,***

- how to recognise and report the symptoms of COVID-19***
- and***
- the need to stay at home if we feel unwell***

*School communities will rise to this challenge, and the key themes of the Public Health Advice necessary to keep us all safe will permeate throughout the school community, with everyone:*

***Applying common sense,***

***Adopting a balanced approach,***

***Doing everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school,***

***Being Aware of continuing to observe physical distancing, good hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette.***



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## **COVID Health and Safety    Measures to be implemented in Schools**

We will strive to

- (i) minimise the risk of introduction of infection in our school
- (ii) manage risk of spread if introduced through:
  - Regular and good hand hygiene;
  - Good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette;
  - Enhanced cleaning regimes; and
  - Maintaining physical distancing in the classroom and within schools;

### **Minister's statement on Face Coverings**

#### ***Updated Guidance around Wearing of Face Coverings***

*The Minister also confirmed that she had been working with the public health authorities to ensure that the public health advice underpinning the safe reopening of schools is fully up to date. The HSE's Health Protection Surveillance Centre has confirmed that all recommendations published in the public health advice by the Minister at the beginning of July including physical distancing guidelines as set out in the recently published roadmap still apply in all schools, with the exception of the recommendations on face coverings which has been updated to reflect the latest research and expertise.*

*It is now recommended that teachers and secondary school students wear face coverings, similar to those worn in shops or on public transport, when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.*

#### **Masks/Face Coverings**

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice.

Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact. It is therefore recommended that teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.



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In certain situations, the use of clear visors will be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

All students on the post primary transport scheme should be asked to wear face coverings unless there is a good reason not to do so.

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:

- Any person with difficulty breathing
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

All students wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

Information on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings is available at

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

All teachers and staff will be aware that they should wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering.

Face coverings should be stored in a space designated for each student that is separate from others when not being worn (e.g., in individually labelled containers or bags).

Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.

Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

We will have additional disposable face coverings available for students in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day.

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

### **Communication with the school community 2020-2021**

We are very mindful of the importance of clear, relevant and timely information. Communication with staff, parents, guardians and students this year is of the utmost importance.

We will be introducing a school app very shortly, it will be easier for everyone in the school community to access all the important information from their phones.



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We will of course still be using the texting service, website, Twitter and Facebook to inform you of developments.

**Student Return Dates**      (Provisional Dates, dependent on DES COVID advice)

- ✚ **Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August**      **Staff Meeting**
- ✚ **Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September**      **Induction Day: First Year students 9.00am – 4pm**
- ✚ **Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September**      **Third and Sixth Year students 9.00 am – 3.20pm  
(Classes as normal for First Years)**
- ✚ **Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September**      **Second, Fifth Year students and LCA 1 students 9am-3.20pm  
(Classes as normal for First Years, Sixth and Third Years)**
- ✚ **Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> September**      **Induction Day for TY ( All students in school)**

**Health**

Parents of students with any **medical issues and who may be at high risk of COVID**, please contact me urgently.

**Emptying of Lockers and the Return of School Book Rental Books**

All students must wear a mask on the day

All books to be returned must be placed in a plastic bag with the **student's name and class from last year** clearly visible on the bag. The bags of books will be stored in the Hall.

The following schedule will operate:

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August**

10am – 12 noon      Incoming TY and 5<sup>th</sup> Year students 2020-2021  
2pm – 3.30pm      Incoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Years Please return only the books that you will not need  
(Irish/German/French/English)



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### Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August

10am – 12 noon Incoming 3<sup>rd</sup> Years  
(Students doing Higher Level Maths, please return the Maths book you have)

2pm – 3.30pm Incoming Sixth Years

### Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August Emptying of Lockers

10am – 12 noon Students in 6<sup>th</sup> year 2019-2020

Incoming First Year student will be given their books on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September.

### **Access to the Building**

Only staff and students will be allowed in the building. Parents and guardians cannot enter the building.

Parents and guardians who have a concern can ring the office or can email me.

Parents and guardians who wish to meet with me can do so using Zoom. I will send a zoom link specifying a day and a time for the meeting

In urgent circumstances we will facilitate a meeting in the school.

### **Canteen**

There will be no canteen in the school for the coming year. All students will bring their own food and drinks.

We have placed extra seating outdoors so that the girls can eat their lunch outdoors when the weather allows.

### **'Drop off Box'**

There will be a 'Drop Off Box' outside the main entrance to the school (door nearest to the office) If students have forgotten lunch/books etc parents can place the item(s) in a bag with the student's name on it in the box.



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### **September Information/Consultation Evenings**

We will make decisions regarding these meetings in late August

### **Student Council**

I look forward to engaging with the Student Council next week regarding the return to school plan. I will hold a Zoom audio meeting.

### **School Calendar 2020-2021**

Please note that the school calendar is available on the website

### **Permission to go “up town”**

First, Second and Third year students will **not** be allowed “up town” at lunchtime. Senior Cycle students will be allowed “up town” as a privilege. This privilege can be removed from a student at any time if any misbehaving occurs ‘up town’ at lunch time.

### **Attendance/Punctuality**

It is very important that students attend school every day. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of being in every class every day.

Arriving in good time for school allows a student to get organised for the classes ahead. The School will be open each morning from **8.00 a.m.**

### **Academic Success/Regular Study/Study Skills**

Establishing good patterns and routines of work and study this September are very important given that students have been out of school since Thursday March 12<sup>th</sup>.

We will be providing study skills classes to all students in September

### **Wellbeing**

Our Wellbeing Team will be meeting to plan for the return of students using amongst other resources the Department of Education resources



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The Department of Education has developed and prepared a comprehensive response to supporting the wellbeing of school communities at this time guided by five essential principles for wellbeing promotion at times like this.

These are promoting:

-  A sense of safety
-  A sense of calm
-  A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
-  A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
-  A sense of hope

### **Choosing option subjects for Junior Cycle**

Students in First Year will engage in taster modules in all option subjects in September. Students will then choose at the end of September their options for Junior Cycle. A Subject Options Zoom audio meeting for parents and students will take place at the end of September.

### **Students leaving the school during the school day**

If a student has to leave the building during the day, their parent/guardian must ring the office to inform the office staff of the departure time. When the parents/guardian arrives in the car park, they must ring the office again. The student will meet their parent/guardian in the car park. The office staff will note the departure time.

### **School Reports**

The school reports will be available to parents on the eportal system. First Year parents will receive login details that will allow them to view their daughter's timetable, attendance and school reports on eportal through the school website.

### **Parent Teacher meeting: Feedback to parents**

Details regarding the Parent Teacher meetings will be shared at a later date

### **Financial Support towards the cost of the Book Rental Scheme**

The Department of Education and Skills give all schools funding to support Needy Students. A needy student is defined as a student from a family where there is:

- Genuine hardship because of unemployment or short time working



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- Prolonged illness of a parent
  - Large family size with inadequate means
  - Single parenthood
  - Other family circumstances (e.g. alcoholism) indicating a similar degree of financial hardship

The Department of Education and Science guidelines divide such families into the following three categories:

- Families which are dependent mainly on social welfare payments
- Families on low incomes from employment (Such families should be in receipt of the Family Income Supplement (FIS) or beneficiaries under the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear scheme)
- Families which are experiencing financial hardship because of particular circumstances in the home. Entitlement to a medical card is not necessarily an indication of eligibility.

### **Finance Matters /New Payment System**

Sincere thanks to parents and guardians who continue to support the school financially. The payment plan scheme has been very successful, a large number of parents and guardians are availing of it. The school as previously indicated is under pressure financially so it is really important that monies due to the school are paid.

Any parents/guardians who do not wish to use the new online payment system can contact the office.

### **Voluntary Contribution**

The Board of Management requests a voluntary contribution from parents. This money will go towards supporting activities for the girls for example Health Promotion Theme Weeks, guest speakers, and sporting activities.

The Board is requesting €100 per student and €150 per family as a voluntary contribution. This represents a cost of €2 per week. The activities provided to the students are excellent and must be funded.

### **Board of Management communication**

Please note that the Board of Management Agreed Report is posted on the school website after each Board meeting.

### **Contact with the Year Head**

I encourage you to contact the Year Head if you wish to discuss your daughter's progress or if you have any pastoral care concerns.



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Year Heads 2020-2021

✚ First Year:	Ms. Catherine Kennedy
✚ Second Year	Ms. Sinead Breen
✚ Third Year:	Ms. Denise Galvin
✚ Transition Year:	Ms. Norma Dowling
✚ Fifth Year:	Ms. Eileen Counihan
✚ Leaving Cert Applied:	Ms. Norma Dowling
✚ Sixth Year:	Ms. Muireann O'Sullivan

**Book Rental Scheme**

The books are the property of the school. Any books lost/damaged must be replaced by parents/guardians.

**Behaviour Code**

The purpose of the behaviour code is to provide, promote and maintain a safe, pleasant and positive learning environment. We want our school to be a place where both students and staff will be able to achieve their full potential. This code is a live and positive set of beliefs and actions that helps to ensure that the school and classroom are effective settings for learning and teaching.

The Code of Behaviour encourages and promotes good behaviour by ensuring that the students understand why the code is important. It stresses their part, as students, in making the code work. It is important that students can see that the code is implemented in a fair and just manner. The code establishes clear boundaries and rules for students while at the same time being inclusive. Students are encouraged to make a worthwhile contribution to the school community through positive behaviour.

The behaviour code is firmly based on the need to have **self-respect** and **respect** for all other members of the school community. This respect fosters a positive attitude in all aspects of school life.

The Board will be initiating a review of the Behaviour Code as previously indicated on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August.

A copy of the Behaviour Code is available on the website

Please download and sign the **Behaviour Acceptance Form**. Scan it or take a photo of it and email it to [reception@preslistowel.ie](mailto:reception@preslistowel.ie)



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### **Uniform.**

The official school uniform is to be worn at all times. All personal items; e.g. jumper, should be marked clearly with owner's name. The school uniform consists of the following:

1. Yellow shirt.
2. Brown trousers or Brown Knee Length skirt with black or brown tights.
3. Dark Brown V-necked jumper with school crest.
4. Pair of black or dark brown shoes. Sneakers are **NOT** allowed except for P.E. class.

Students will wear their PE gear for the full day on the day that they are timetabled for PE. Students who are not participating in the PE class due to health concerns will wear the uniform

The school hoodies that were purchased in March will be given to students in September and can be worn for PE.

The school hoodie does NOT replace the school jumper

The school recommends that students do **not** wear make-up. Excessive use of hair colouring and **facial jewellery is not acceptable and students will be asked to remove it.**

### **Internet Usage**

The Board will be reviewing this Policy on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August. The Policy will be available on the website.

Please download and sign the school **Internet Acceptable Use Policy Form**. Scan it or take a photo of it and email it to [reception@preslistowel.ie](mailto:reception@preslistowel.ie)

### **Social Media Platforms**

Presentation Secondary School has various Social Media platforms which you can follow us on and keep up to date with news and events.

Our website is [www.presentationsecondarylistowel.ie](http://www.presentationsecondarylistowel.ie)

School Email: [office@preslistowel.ie](mailto:office@preslistowel.ie)

Twitter account @pressec\_pss

You can find us on Facebook under @PresSecListowel. We would appreciate a like, a follow or even a look at the website.



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### **Listowel Races September 2020**

The School will operate as normal that week.

### **Road Safety outside the School gates and Access to the building**

We are asking students to be in the building before 8.50am each morning so as to facilitate a smooth running of the school

Both gates on the Ballybunion will be open each morning and evening. Each Year Group will have a specific door for entering and leaving the building.

We receive a number of complaints on an ongoing basis from members of the public regarding the behaviour of drivers and students outside the School in the mornings and evenings. Please park safely before students get out of your car. We are fortunate that there is adequate parking opposite the school. Can I please ask parents not to park on the double yellow lines outside the school.

### **Car Park**

Can I gently remind parents that the school car park is limited to **staff only** between 8.30am and 4.30pm please. We have very genuine concerns about road safety issues on the main road following a number of complaints recently. We have two wheelchair car parking spaces that we would like everybody to respect.

### **Supervised Study**

Supervised Study will not operate this academic year.

### **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are allowed in school. They must be stored in the student's locker or in their school bag and turned off at all times.

If a student wants to contact parents/guardians, school management and the office staff will facilitate the students.

Please download the [Mobile Phone Policy Acceptance Form](#). Scan it or take a photo of it and email it to [reception@preslistowel.ie](mailto:reception@preslistowel.ie)



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### **School Trips**

Please download the school trips policy acceptance\_form. Scan it or take a photo of it and email it to [reception@preslistowel.ie](mailto:reception@preslistowel.ie)

### **School Insurance matters**

Alliance have advised that all students must purchase the 24hr Insurance Cover, therefore, it is compulsory that all students have the 24hr cover.

I have been advised to inform parents that students who arrive on the school premises before 8.30am in the morning are the responsibility of their parents. School supervision technically begins at 8.30am.

### **Use of School Journal**

The school journal is a very useful organisational tool. The Student Council reviewed the journal in May. We now have separate journals for First Years. I would ask you to encourage your daughter to develop good habits in relation to recording homework and completion of same. Please check and sign your daughter's school journal on a weekly basis.

### **Data Protection; Use of Pictures of Students in Publicity Literature 2018/19**

Staff sometimes use photography/video in the classroom and to record such events as trips, projects, sports and competitions. Photographs and videos may be used on the school Social Media platforms and in Newsletters. Local media also cover school events.

The Board will be reviewing this Policy on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August.

Please download the Data Protection Form. Scan it or take a photo of it and email it to [reception@preslistowel.ie](mailto:reception@preslistowel.ie)

### **Parents' Association**

I will be liaising very closely with the Chairperson of the Parents' Association before the school reopens.

Yours sincerely,

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*Ms. Eileen Kennelly*

**Principal**

Email: [Eileen.kennelly@preslistowel.ie](mailto:Eileen.kennelly@preslistowel.ie)



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## **Check List for Return to School** **2020-2021**

**Please download the form, sign it. Scan the form or take a photo of it an email it to**  
**[reception@preslistowel.ie](mailto:reception@preslistowel.ie)**

1. Behaviour Code Acceptance Form 2020-2021
2. Acceptable use Policy Internet Usage 2020-2021
3. Mobile Phone Policy Acceptance Form
4. School Trips Policy Acceptance Form
5. Respect and Dignity Policy (Anti-bullying Policy) Acceptance Form
6. Data Protection: Permission to use photographs and videos of Students
7. All expenses to be paid please. Thank you