



Parents' Letter August 2021

12th August 2021

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. As society continues to manage the return to 'normal' activities 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. As in August/September 2020 there is a considerable amount of guidance available to schools and we are following all the protocols.

Our COVID Response Plan is available on the school website

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

The Deputy Principal, Marguerite Linnane and I have arranged the following Zoom audio meetings for parents and students next week, week of 16th August.

We will be recording each year group Zoom meeting. These recordings will be placed on the website so as to facilitate viewing at any time.

Please email us with any questions that you may have, we will address your concerns during the meetings. The chat function will also be available during the meetings.

-  **1st Years:** Monday 16th August at 2.30pm
-  **2nd Years:** Monday 16th August at 3.30pm

-  **3rd Years:** Tuesday 17th August at 2.30pm
-  **5th Years:** Tuesday 17th August at 3.30pm

-  **6th Years:** Wednesday 18th August at 2.30pm

The power point presentation linked to each year group meeting will be available on the school website.



COVID

I wish to draw your attention to the following

Compulsory wearing of Masks

As required by the Department of Education the Board of Management has approved the policy '*Health and Safety Control of COVID-19 Policy for students*'

Please note the Department of Education guidance on the wearing of masks in Post Primary schools

Wearing of face coverings – a requirement

Staff and students, at post-primary level, are required to wear a face covering. The exemptions to this are set out below.

Cloth face coverings

Cloth face coverings are recommended for staff and students. 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.

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Face coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.



Visors

Cloth face coverings are more effective than visors. In the limited circumstances where a cloth face covering cannot be worn clear visors must be considered. The alternate use of a clear visor can also be considered when a staff member is interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

Exemptions

A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school by, or on behalf of, any person (staff or student) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:

- *any person with difficulty breathing who cannot wear a cloth face covering or a visor*
- *any person who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance*
- *any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.*

In circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided that person (staff or student) will be refused entry to the school.

The Department has also issued the following clarification regarding the physical distancing requirement when a face covering, supported by a medical certificate, cannot be worn:

The view is that there will be a very small number who are covered by the limited exceptions who cannot wear a cloth face covering or visor and that in these limited circumstances the arrangements in place for physical distancing (1m), hand hygiene, cough etiquette and cleaning would apply and should be strictly observed.

Directions for effective use of face coverings

• *Information should be provided by schools on the proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Advice on how to use face coverings properly can be found here.*



- All staff and students should be reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.
- All staff (and students, where applicable), should be aware that they should wash or sanitise hands (using a hand sanitiser) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering.
- Face coverings should be stored in a designated space, for example, in an individually labelled container or bag.
- 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.

Whilst staff and students may wish to utilise their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools should have a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings (or if appropriate, visors) for staff and students in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

Use of medical grade face coverings

Schools should consider the specific circumstances where the use of medical face masks (to EU Standard EN 14683) may be more appropriate for staff as part of their risk assessment for employees returning to work (for example where staff by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs such as SNAs).

Students using school transport All students on the post primary transport scheme are required to wear face coverings subject to the exemptions above.

I wish to draw your attention to the following.

- ✚ **those who have symptoms or suspect they have the virus please stay out of school,**
- ✚ everybody must maintain best practice in terms of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette in school
- ✚ everybody must minimise social contacts and respect physical distancing practices.

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

- ✚ recognise and report the symptoms of COVID-19

And

- ✚ stay at home if we feel unwell



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 the school.

Communication with the school community 2021-2022

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

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

The move to hour long classes

We have decided to move to hour long classes. Morning break and lunch times will remain as they were. Please note the following:

Morning break: 11am -11.15am

Lunch time: 1.15pm-2pm

- ✚ School commences at 9am each morning
- ✚ School will finish at 4pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.
- ✚ School will finish at 3pm on Thursday and Friday.
- ✚ Each class group will have their own base room.



Student Return Dates

✚ **Thursday 26th August** **Staff Meeting and 5th Year Mentoring Training**

✚ **Friday 27th August** **Induction Day: First Year students 9.00am – 3pm**

Incoming First Year students will be given their school books on Friday 27th August

Incoming First Year parents/guardians/students please wait until you meet with your teachers before purchasing stationary, copies, hard backed copies, folders etc. We are very mindful of the cost of the return to school for parents/guardians

✚ **Monday 30th August** **Third and Sixth Year/LCA 2 students 9.00 am – 4pm**
(Classes as normal for First Years)

✚ **Tuesday 31st August** **Second and Fifth Year, LCA 1 students 9am-4pm**
(Classes as normal for First Years, Sixth and Third Years)

The School App

Our school app has been a great addition to the day to day running of school life. The app allows for better communication between parents and the school. The news feed and gallery are updated regularly to keep parents up to date with school news and events. The app is clearly laid out and easy to use. It can be found in the app store by searching 'preslistowel'. It is essential that you download and use the school app.

Health

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



Book in a Bag Initiative

There will be times during the school day when a teacher will be involved in a meeting, be engaged in professional development classes, be away with students on extracurricular activities or be absent due to illness. On all occasions class work will be assigned to students to do during supervised classes. There is no such thing as a 'free class'

Junior Cycle students in particular at times will have their assigned class work completed before the end of class. This year we are making it compulsory that all Junior Cycle students will have a reading book in their bag every day so as to ensure that they are making the most of every opportunity to read their books. The Year Heads at Junior Cycle will be overseeing this initiative in conjunction with the teacher responsible for the Library/Reading Initiatives.

Access to the Building

Only staff and students will be allowed in the building. Parents and guardians can enter the building by appointment only. Please contact the office if you wish to make an appointment. Parents and guardians who have a concern can ring the office or can email me or any member of staff.

Parents and guardians who wish to meet with Marguerite Linnane, Deputy Principal or myself are very welcome to do so. Please ring the office to arrange the time/date for the meeting

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.

September Information/Consultation Evenings

Prior to Covid we usually held evening meetings in September for parents of each year group. Given the current circumstances we will be having online Zoom meetings as we did last year.



Student Council

I look forward to engaging with the Student Council in the coming year.

School Calendar 2021-2022

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 in September is very important. We will be providing study skills classes to all students in September. The Year Heads will be responsible for organising these classes

Year Heads for 2021-2022

The Year Heads are a very important point of contact for you as a parent/guardian. We are all committed to ensuring that your daughter is happy in our school, enjoys her learning experience in the school, has friends and engages in the life of the school.

We will be rolling out a programme of extracurricular activities in the coming weeks, all Covid compliant no doubt.



- ✚ Year Head to First Years: Ms. Jessica Keane jessica.keane@preslistowel.ie
- ✚ Year Head to Second Years: Mrs Margaret Daly margaret.daly@preslistowel.ie
- ✚ Year Head to Third Years : Ms Sinead Breen sinead.breen@preslistowel.ie
- ✚ Year Head to Fifth Years: Ms. Denise Galvin denise.galvin@preslistowel.ie
- ✚ Year Head to Sixth Years: Mrs Muireann O'Sullivan muireann.osullivan@preslistowel.ie
- ✚ Year Head to LCA: Ms Norma Dowling norma.dowling@preslistowel.ie

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.

Wellbeing

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

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 fill out the form on the school app and submit it.



All students leaving the building at any time must inform the office that they are leaving, students whose parent/guardian has submitted the permission to leave form on the school app must report to the office before exiting the building

When the parents/guardian arrives in the car park across the road, they must ring the office. The student will meet their parent/guardian in the car park. The office staff will note the departure time.

School Reports

We are replacing the eportal system that we have used in recent years with a system called Compass.

Compass will be used to track attendance, record class test results, manage student reports and to track student progress. Absent forms, late notes and permission to leave notes can all be submitted by parents/guardians through the Compass app which are then sent directly to the school's office and relevant Year Head. We will give you more details about it on the Zoom meeting.

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
- 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.

The application form is available on the school website, click on the parents/pupils tab, click on Forms and scroll down.



The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday 20th August 2021

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.

WAY2PAY

The Company with responsibility for online payment, WAY2PAY, are experiencing technical difficulties at present, they have reassured us that the system will be up and running by the end of the week of Monday 16th August.

Any parents/guardians who do not wish to use the 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.

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 24th August.

A copy of the Behaviour Code is available on the website

Please submit the Behaviour Acceptance Form on the school app.

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 half zip is not compulsory, it is optional. It is not available in Listowel or in the school. It can be purchased directly from the supplier, Redbear in Mallow, Co. Cork. Please ring Colman on **085 1891711**

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.**

Respect and Dignity Policy (Anti-bullying Policy) Acceptance Form



Please submit the Respect and Dignity Policy (Anti-bullying Policy) Acceptance Form on the school app.

Acceptable Use Policy/Internet Usage

The Policy is available on the website.

Please submit the Internet Acceptable Use Policy Form on the school app.

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

School Email: 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.

Listowel Races September 2021

At this time we are unsure about what is happening regarding the week of 20th September. We will keep you updated.

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 Road 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 submit the Mobile Phone Policy Acceptance Form on the school app.

School Trips

Please submit the School Trips Policy Acceptance Form on the school app

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. We 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



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 18th August. **Please submit the Data Protection Form on the school app.**

Parents' Association

I will be liaising with Carmel Kelly, the Chairperson of the Parents' Association, before the school reopens.

Finally, we are looking forward very much to seeing staff, parents and students in the coming weeks. If you have any query, concerns or wish to have any matter clarified, please contact Marguerite or myself. We are very keen to support you and your daughter(s) as we embrace another academic year together. How your daughter experiences life as a student in our school matters hugely to us, we are available at all times to support her and you of course.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Eileen Kennelly

Principal

Email: eileen.kennelly@preslistowel.ie

phone contact directly 086 7005585

Members of the Board of Management 2019-2022

Trustee Nominees

Shay Downes Chairperson

Marie O'Connor Ed

Hayes

Mary Frances Behan

Parents' Association Nominees

Debbie Hannan

Elaine Fritzell

Staff Nominees



Margaret Daly Norma
Dowling

Check List for Return to School **2021-2022**

Please complete the following six forms on the school app

1. Behaviour Code Acceptance Form 2021-2022
2. Acceptable use Policy Internet Usage 2021-2022
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 prior to 25th August please. Thank you