



# Return to School 2020 Guidance Document

Board of Management  
Presentation College, Currylea, Tuam  
August 24<sup>th</sup> 2020



**Presentation College, Currylea**  
**Return to School 2020 Guidance Document**  
**Ratified by Board of Management 24/8/2020**

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## 1.0: Introduction

Please note that all the following information is current and subject to change at any time on the advice of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope all is well with you and your family. We are all really looking forward to welcoming everyone back. In order for this to happen safely, it is vitally important that we all approach this return to school with a collective, positive and consistent approach. We all return to school with a sense of calm, of hope, and a longing for that connectedness to Presentation College Currylea which we all miss so much.

We will spend time at the start of our new term re-educating our students on the symptoms of COVID-19, the use of face coverings, good hand hygiene and coughing and sneezing etiquette. We will remind students at regular intervals throughout the school day of our new motto **Hands, Face, Space** and are developing a visual reminder which students will stick to the front of their journals.

As parents/guardians we urge you all to support us in our work in ensuring that our students return with an awareness of physical distancing with others. Also remember that young people take on the mood around them so it is important that we all enter this new phase with an air of positivity and patience.

It must also be acknowledged that there is no "risk-free" re-opening of schools and the acting chief medical officer Ronan Glynn admits that it is "virtually inevitable" that Covid-19 clusters will occur in schools when they re-open. However, clear guidance has been provided to all schools so that each school can work to ensure the safest possible return to school for all students, staff and the wider school community.

We will continue to keep you informed via the Compass App, email and the school website.

A COVID-19 team, representing Teachers, Ancillary Staff and Management has been in place for many weeks now. This team meets each day and is working on procedures and protocols



that must be in place for students to return. Preparation work is continuing, and we will continue to ensure we do everything that is possible to minimise the risk posed by COVID -19.

To date we can inform you of the following:

1. All the classrooms have been thoroughly deep cleaned and all have been reconfigured to maximise physical distancing. Our rooms are approximately 49 Sq.M allowing for 24 tables and chairs. This enables us to afford 1m physical distancing comfortably. The teacher's desk will be 2M from the nearest student in the majority of rooms. This is all in keeping with the guidelines issued by the Dept. of Education.
2. We have had all the windows in the school tightened to allow for them to remain open and door stoppers have been placed at each door, allowing for good ventilation in each room.
3. The timetable and curriculum have been refined to ensure the vast majority of classes will have less than 24 students, and we have additional larger classrooms at our disposal as over-flow rooms. We have converted the TY kitchen into a large room and also the former "Hair and Beauty" LCA room has been converted into a small classroom.
4. Stickers have been placed under all desks to ensure that the 1M is maintained.
5. Our corridors are just under 2m wide so we have a traffic flow system in place which allows for a one-way system in all but one small stretch of the corridors. Corridors are marked with stickers to remind students of 2m physical distancing.
6. We have reduced the movement on the corridors by assigning base classrooms to all students. This means, that apart from practical classes and splits, students will remain in the one room all day.
7. Our cleaning staff have had their hours extended. This ensures that we have cleaners available all day to carry out extra duties especially with regard to touch points. They have received specific training regarding Covid 19 cleaning regimes and will wear disposable aprons and masks. They will follow the guidelines as laid out in the Department of Education guidance.
8. All offices have been fitted with Polycarbonate screens to ensure the safety of all visitors. All visitors to the school must make an appointment and fill in a Contact Tracing Log. We will not be able to facilitate visitors without an appointment.



9. New hand sanitiser stations have been ordered for the school. All classrooms will have hand sanitiser at the door and students will sanitise their hands at the beginning of each lesson. We encourage students to bring their own hand sanitiser also.
10. All bathrooms now have hot water, soap and drying facilities. The bathrooms are clearly marked to ensure 2M physical distancing.
11. Each Year group has been designated specific bathroom facilities. These will be regularly cleaned throughout the day. Students may wish to bring a dry face cloth to school for the purpose of drying their hands.
12. The school has appointed a “Return to School Aide” and 2 Lead Worker Representatives from the staff.
13. All staff will have complete a Return to Work questionnaire and will complete a training course provided by the Department of Education and Skills. All ancillary staff who have returned to work have completed same.
14. New staggered breaktimes and lunchtimes will ensure physical distancing and an opportunity for students to get fresh air and stretch their legs. Seniors will be allowed up town as normal and Juniors will have use of the canteen and outdoor facilities on alternative days. New Picnic benches have been ordered from Irish Recycling Products and should arrive in the coming weeks allowing the students to sit comfortably outside. Students may wish to bring a jacket to school for this purpose.  
Lunchtime and Breaktime are split over 2 periods which ensures that only half the student population are on break at the same time.
15. We have removed all bins in classrooms and replaced with a pedal bin for general waste. For this reason, we are no longer allowing plastic bottles at school. All students should bring a reusable bottle which they can refill in any of our water stations.
16. We have employed new teaching staff to allow us to decrease some class sizes. Staff absences due to Covid 19 will be inevitable and we hope that our new staff will also be able to substitute on these occasions.
17. We have increased supervision on the corridors during breaks so that we can remind students of the need to remain 2M apart if face coverings are removed, 1m otherwise.
18. All students will now enter the school at the gym entrance and exit via the pool-side door and 2<sup>nd</sup> exit in that area. TY students will use separate entrance and exit doors. We encourage all parents to drop student off at the bus bay on O’ Toole Rd. and students



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can walk through the black gate to the gym door entrance. We ask that parents do not enter the school car park.

19. We have positioned a box at the main door of the school for parents to drop “forgotten items” into. Please just let Tina know you are doing this by using the intercom. If you are dropping money, please place in an envelope with your daughter’s name and pop through the letter box.

All of the documents are available at [gov.ie/backtoschool](http://gov.ie/backtoschool)

All students will receive a full and detailed briefing on the measures they must follow to minimise the COVID 19 risk on their first day back to school.

## **2.0: Health and Safety Measures**

### ***2.1: Knowing the Symptoms of COVID-19***

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. Those symptoms are as follows:

- high temperature
- cough
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss of smell, or taste or distortion of taste

If your daughter complains of any of these symptoms, **we are insisting for the sake of the school community that you keep her at home and call your GP without delay and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation**

- If a **student or staff member** has been abroad to a **'non-green list country'** prior to returning to school (i.e. within 14 days), we are asking that they ensure they remain in isolation for 14 consecutive days prior to returning to school. If your daughter has been abroad prior to school resuming, we would appreciate an email from you about this. All our European students have been fully informed.
- Students will be encouraged and expected to follow health advice regarding hand sanitation, respiratory etiquette, etc. Requirements in this regard will be clearly communicated to all students from the beginning of the year.



- An Isolation Room will be available in the school should a member of the School Community become ill. It is vital that all Parents/Guardians have registered the correct contact details with the school. If in doubt, contact the school office immediately on 093 – 24575 or edit details on the Compass App and save.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers will be deployed in every teaching space, assembly areas and entry points of the school building. All students will be required to use hand sanitiser when entering the school in the morning and when entering every classroom throughout the school day.
- Students will be provided with cleaning wipes to wipe down their desk or work station as they leave. Students may also bring their own if they prefer.
- Wash hand basins, hot running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all toilets and kitchens.

### **3.0: Coming To and From School**

As per Government regulations, all students travelling on school transport will be required to **wear a facemask, sit next to sibling(s)** or remain seated next to the same individual for the remainder of the term.

### **3.1: Start and Finish Time**

School will begin at 9am each morning. Students are expected to be in their assigned seats at 8:55 am.

School will finish at 3:55 pm on Monday and Tuesday.

School will finish at 3:15pm Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

All students will have 2 breaks - 15 minutes and 40 minutes.

The school will remain open to those waiting for buses. Students must remain in their base classes until they leave. Supervision will continue for 30 minutes after last bell.

### **3.2 Walking or Cycling**

All schools are encouraging students to walk or cycle to school if they can do so. Parents/guardians are required to observe and respect all social distancing protocols in relation



to any contact with the school. This includes maintaining a two-metre distance to other families when dropping off or collecting their children from the school and any contact with the school.

### **3.3: Arriving at School**

When students arrive at school on the first day, they should proceed directly to the gym for Assembly. Here they will receive a comprehensive COVID 19 induction. From there we will assign them their classroom and distribute a timetable. Students should not congregate in groups close to one another. Entrances and Exits are clearly marked.

On all other days' students will proceed directly to their base classroom.

Students will be asked to adhere to queue management protocols in the mornings when entering the school building. Physical distancing signage will be used to indicate 2m distancing in corridors.

### **4.0: Visiting the School / Appointments**

- School personnel will not be in a position to meet parents on a one to one basis during this Academic year unless it is essential and by prior appointment. All such requests and appointments must be made through the school office 093 24575 or email [prescurrylea@gmail.com](mailto:prescurrylea@gmail.com)
- All invited visitors to the school will be asked to wear face coverings and complete contact tracing recording sheets at the main office.

### **5.0: Face Coverings/Masks**

- Further clarifications as issued by The Minister for Education on Friday, August 7th, stipulate that all students and teachers will be required to wear face coverings where a physical distance of 2m cannot be maintained. In this regard, students will be required to wear masks in all circumstances where a distance of 2m cannot be maintained.
- Students are requested to bring their own face covering and a zip lock bag for storage. Disposable face coverings will be available from the school in the case of emergency.
- Face Coverings should be washed every day in a 60 degree wash.



## **6.0: Locker Management**

In the interest of Health and Safety and in an attempt to adhere to public health advice on physical distancing, lockers will not be available at the moment. We will review the situation at the end of each month in consultation with Student Council and the Covid Team. We are working on alternatives to students bringing books to school which will involve the use of an online book and Google Classroom. Guidance on this will be available shortly.

For this purpose, we ask that all student have access to a device/smart phone. Students may also like to bring ear phones and a power bank to school. Remember to clearly mark everything and keep safely at school. Please inform your daughter's Year Head if a device is not available and we will seek to find a solution. Again, please be patient with us as we navigate through these new circumstances.

Year Heads:

1 <sup>st</sup> Year: Ms. Kelleher	<a href="mailto:teresa.kelleher@prescurrylea.com">teresa.kelleher@prescurrylea.com</a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year: Ms. Harris	<a href="mailto:norita.harris-coleman@prescurrylea.com">norita.harris-coleman@prescurrylea.com</a>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year: Ms. Fahy	<a href="mailto:anmarie.fahy@prescurrylea.com">anmarie.fahy@prescurrylea.com</a>
TY: Ms. Quirke	<a href="mailto:leona.quirke@prescurrylea.com">leona.quirke@prescurrylea.com</a>
6 <sup>th</sup> Year: Ms. Keating	<a href="mailto:maire.keating@prescurrylea.com">maire.keating@prescurrylea.com</a>
5 <sup>th</sup> Year: Mr. Mc Grath	<a href="mailto:sean.mcgrath@prescurrylea.com">sean.mcgrath@prescurrylea.com</a>

## **7.0: Compass**

It is important that all parents have downloaded the Compass App as this will now be used for all school payments as well as school reports, recording absences etc.

If you need assistance in this regard, please email [sean.mcgrath@prescurrylea.com](mailto:sean.mcgrath@prescurrylea.com)

## **8.0: Uniform**

[Full school uniform](#) must be worn at all times. There are no changes to our uniform policy and student will not be allowed to class if any part of their uniform is missing or not in line with policy. Face tan, make up and piercings are forbidden.

We would also ask that students do not wear “fake nails” to school for hand hygiene reasons.



## **9.0: Personal Hygiene**

- Students will be encouraged and expected to follow health advice regarding hand sanitation, respiratory etiquette, etc. Requirements in this regard will be clearly communicated to all students from the beginning of the year.
- It would be advisable for all students where possible to shower on your return from school to support the minimisation of risk to your family unit.

## **10.0: Canteen**

The Canteen facilities will be available to all students. Procedures and details will be explained on your child's first day back at school. Our canteen will operate as a pick and go service only. Staggered breaks and lunch periods will be introduced for Year Groups to minimise queuing and maximise access to canteen. Canteen facilities will be clearly marked with physical distancing signage. All students will be required to cooperate with all the safety measures implemented. If the service is not respected, we will be forced to withdraw the service.

## **11.0 Cleaning Routines**

Student classrooms will have appropriate cleaning products provided to enable students and staff to wipe down their desk, chair and surface on entry and before leaving the room. (A specific protocol will be developed in this regard).

Additional cleaning materials and equipment will be available in every teaching space. Any student found to be interfering with or misusing these safety products and equipment will be subject to immediate sanction.

## **12.0 Physical Distancing**

1. ***Students and staff*** will adhere to all traffic flow signs by adhering our one-way system.
2. Every effort has been made to ensure 1m Physical distancing between students in classroom layouts (in line with the Department of Education Roadmap (July 2020)).
3. Queuing systems have been implemented in specific areas throughout the campus. Students are asked to comply with queuing systems that have been put in place. These will be communicated in detail to students on their return.



4. To ensure safety for all, visors have been provided to all staff.

### **13.0: Students Personal PPE equipment**

- In addition to our PPE stocks, it is advisable for students to carry their own personal hand sanitiser and anti-viral cleaning wipes which are available in most shops and pharmacists. We will supply a initial pack of anti-bacterial wipes to all students.

### **14.0: Standardised Operating Procedures for Classroom Management**

A standard operating procedure is a written instruction describing how a routine task is to be carried out; when, where and by whom.

#### **14.1: Classroom**

- Maintain an optimal temperature range between 18c-20c.
- Leave all doors and windows open to ventilate the rooms sufficiently.
- Ensure all attendance rolls taken are accurate.
- Floor markings will address table locations to support physical distancing of 1 metre.
- The teacher will endeavour to keep 2 metres from students.
- Teachers will encourage students to share their completed assignments on Google Classroom to minimise collection of copies.
- At the end of class, if students are leaving the classroom, the teacher will invite students to leave row by row in a controlled manner.
- All class seating plans must be uploaded to Compass to support contact tracing.
- All students and staff must have all their own supplies; there will be no sharing/borrowing of books, copies, pens, etc. within the classroom.

### **15.0: School Calendar**

Calendar 2020/2021 was previously sent via email and Compass App including start dates for each year group. Please email [info@prescurrylea.com](mailto:info@prescurrylea.com) if you need another copy.



### **16:0 Contact Details**

Please ensure that we have up to date contact details on file for you. It is essential that you ensure that we have up to date contact details (home address, phone numbers, email address and emergency contact numbers). You can edit your mobile number and email address on the Compass App, otherwise email [prescurrylea@gmail.com](mailto:prescurrylea@gmail.com) and Tina will update for you.

### **17.0: Code of Behaviour**

All new parents will receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour. Once received, we expect that you will support us in maintaining great discipline in the school. Our Code of behaviour will be amended to reflect guidance coming from the Department of Education in relation to Covid 19 related breaches.

Our school works on an atmosphere of mutual respect and great relationships between students and teachers. We rarely have discipline issues in our school and if issues do occur, our restorative approach usually leads to a quick resolution to the satisfaction of all parties. There is no doubt that this will continue through these challenging times.

### **18.0: Student Journal**

The Student Journal has proven to be an invaluable communication tool between home and school. The Journal is intended as an aid to students to support them in their studies. Pages are also set aside for communication between parents and teachers. Students are expected to have their Journal with them at all times. Journals are regularly checked by tutors and Year Head.

### **19.0: Parent-Teacher Meeting**

Further advice is due from the Department of Education and Skills in relation to Parent-Teacher Meetings. We will update parents once we receive this guidance.

### **20.0 School Parking**

The school car park is for staff use only. Post-primary students are prohibited from parking in the school grounds. Students who drive to school by car must make their own arrangements for parking.



### **21.0: Books**

1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year parents will have received notification regarding the collection of new books. We will supply all other students with their new books once they return. Please direct all queries to School Book Scheme Coordinator Ms. Heffernan at [ursula.heffernan@prescurrylea.com](mailto:ursula.heffernan@prescurrylea.com)

### **22.0: State Examinations Guidance**

Guidance on this was published by the Department of Education last Friday and is available at <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/assessment-arrangements-junior-cycle-and-leaving-certificate-examinations-2021>

### **23.0: Very High-Risk Category**

Any parent who has concerns for their daughter and feel they may fall into a very high-risk category and believe that a return to school may be challenging, please contact the Principal at [neasa.cosgrove@prescurrylea.com](mailto:neasa.cosgrove@prescurrylea.com) so we can start to plan for supporting you.

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)



- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition

### **24.0: School Planning Day Closure**

Once the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) have updated their modified subject specifications (syllabus or programme of learning), The school will be required to close for one day to support a professional development event for our staff to upskill on these updates. The Department of Education and Skills asked the NCCA to take into account last year's closure and adjust each subject's programme of learning to afford greater fairness to our students. We will advise in future correspondence when this day will occur.

### **25.0: Sudden School Closure or Year Groups Advised to Stay at Home**

In the unforeseen event, that the school cannot provide safe supervision of students because there is unavailable staff, the Principal may be forced in certain circumstances to ask certain year groups to remain at home. We just want to set parents' expectations that if this sudden announcement occurs, it does not mean the school has a sudden COVID-19 related issue. It just implies the school cannot source enough teachers to provide adequate supervision for a safe environment.

### **26.0: Students with Additional Needs**

If your daughter has additional needs and you are concerned, please contact our SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) Ms. Collins at [bridget.collins@prescurrylea.com](mailto:bridget.collins@prescurrylea.com)

### **27.0: Concluding Comments**

We **expect revisions and updates** to this document. Every effort has been made to provide all the necessary requirements as laid out by the Department of Education and Skills, but **individual responsibility** is the key for a successful reopening.



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As a school staff, we are very excited about welcoming back our wonderful students to school. It's been a long 6 months and we have all really missed our students. We look forward to welcoming them all back to Currylea and especially our 1<sup>st</sup> Years and the many new students who are transferring to our school. We always feel blessed to have such supportive parents and we look forward to connecting back with you all.

Please rest assured we will continue to do all we can to support your daughters as they return to /start school in Presentation College Currylea.

“We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now” Martin Luther King

Stay Safe everyone and mind each other.

Kind Regards

Neasa Cosgrove  
Principal