

Bulletin No. 2

25th August 2021

Dear students, parents and guardians,

We are really looking forward to welcoming our students back to Creagh College. Please see below our plan for the phased reopening of Creagh College. This is to allow us to fully train and brief staff and students on COVID-19 protocols.

Dates for the re-opening of Creagh College:

Monday 30 th August	College re-opens for 6 th years only (2pm-4pm)
Tuesday 31 st August	College re-opens for 5 th years only (1.20pm-3.20pm)
Wednesday 1 st September	1 st & 6 th years only (Full Day)
Thursday 2 nd September	1 st & 6 th years only (Full Day)
Friday 3 rd September	2 nd & 3 rd years only (Full Day)
Monday 6 th September	All students (First day for TY students) (Full Day)

Please find below a list of some of the measures that the school has in place for the return to school:

- **As per public health advice “no person (child/teacher/parent) should attend an educational setting if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19”.**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- fatigue
- aches and pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea.

A COVID-19 Response Plan is in place (on our school website). This includes a range of measures that the school is taking including:

- Sanitizing stations for every classroom and entrance/exit are in place
- Signage is in place to highlight the measures that help to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Morning break and lunchtime are staggered to help with social distancing.
- Classrooms are reconfigured to facilitate maximum space for social distancing. Where 2 metre social distancing cannot be achieved, face masks must be worn.
- Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:
 1. Any person with breathing difficulty
 2. Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
 3. Any person who is unable to remove the face covering without assistance
 4. 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. Please email this information to creaghcollege@wwetb.ie with your son/daughter's name, class and year group.
 5. All other students are required to wear face masks at all times when social distancing is not possible, i.e. in most class settings.
- Toilet facilities are adjusted to help maintain social distancing and hot water and soap are provided in all toilets
- There are 3 entrance/exit points for students
- Staff or students who have been abroad in 'high-risk countries' SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL until they have fully complied with the current regulations around international travel (see HSE.ie)
- Cleaning products to sanitize surfaces are available in all classrooms
- An isolation room is available in school to accommodate students who develop/exhibit symptoms of Covid-19 while in school
- Please check in with the college website for further information and updates www.creaghcollege.ie
- Please visit DES website for further information www.education.ie

VSWARE

We will be publishing students timetables for parents to view in advance of school reopening. This is to facilitate students knowing what tutor room to go to on the first morning.

For First year students, we will have Meitheal leaders (6th year students), on hand to guide you to your tutor room. Could all students please note that there is now a one-way system in operation around the school. Please go to <https://support.vsware.ie/parentprofiles> for support on how to access VSware. There will be teachers available to help guide you where to go also.

First Day

Regrettably, parents/guardians may not accompany their child(ren) into the school on the first day. Some students will arrive by bus, and we would encourage those who can, to walk and cycle if possible. Students should arrive no earlier than 8.15am (unless arriving by public transport), wear appropriate face coverings (see below) and remain 2 metres apart from other students as they arrive and follow signage, floor markings and staff members for guidance.

Students can enter the school through either of the front doors of the school from 8.15 onwards. On entry they will be asked to go to their Class Tutor room. As per national guidelines, all staff will wear face coverings and students will be required to do so where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. This will be explained to students during the induction training.

Breaktimes

There are some changes to breaktimes this year to maximise physical distancing and interaction between year groups. However, it is not possible to show these changes on the students' timetables so they will be adjusted by each student as it is explained to them.

We have divided the school into having two separate break and lunch times. This will assist students having adequate space at breaks to eat while remaining socially distant. The year groups have been divided as per size of group and to allow students access to lockers when they become available (see below). It is of utmost importance that all students are cognisant of classes still in operation while they might be on break. Students will be limited to certain areas of the school, along with the pitches, during breaks. We would encourage all students to bring suitable coats etc. to avail of the outdoor breaks as far as possible. Students will need to take welcome breaks from their face coverings and can do so if they socially distance themselves, particularly outdoors.

5th and 6th years - Lunchbreak

Our most senior students will now be allowed to leave the school for their lunch break. This is a privilege that we want to see working for our students. It is of utmost importance that students represent the college well when leaving and returning from the school and that they are responsible for their punctuality. This is a privilege that we do not want to rescind from our most senior students in the future.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Sanitiser dispensers are installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, at the door of each classroom, etc. Soap (through soap dispensers, which emulsifies at low temperatures) and hot water is available in all toilets. Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message. BAM, our facility managers have employed cleaning staff to ensure that all dispensers are adequately stocked throughout the day and frequently touched items are cleaned regularly throughout the day. Each classroom will be deep-cleaned at the end of every day.

Handwashing and Sanitising Regime for Students:

- Upon entering school: Sanitiser available at entrance doors
- Upon entering each classroom: Sanitiser
- Before eating at little break: Handwashing
- After returning from break: Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
- Before eating at lunchtime: Handwashing
- After returning from lunch: Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
- Before going home: Sanitiser available at exit doors
- After using toilet: Handwashing

Classrooms have been modified to create as much space as possible and students are assigned to base classrooms as much as possible. Students will be distanced insofar as is practicable, with approximately 1m distancing achieved in all rooms. Disinfectant wipes will be provided in all classrooms and where students move to a different room or desk, they will be provided with a wipe to clean their area before taking their seat. Teachers will do the same when they enter a new classroom. Students are expected to carry out this task efficiently. Specific bins will be provided in each room for the disposal of wipes, masks and any other potentially contaminated item.

Entrance and Exit Points

To facilitate students arriving and entering and exiting the grounds safely, we ask that no students be present on school grounds before 8.15am. Students can enter the school grounds through the two front gates and proceed directly to their class tutor room. Unless it is a practical room, students should enter their classroom and take their designated seat immediately.

Traffic calming/Buses

We encourage as many students as possible to walk/cycle to/from school if possible. If students are availing of bus transport to school, there are new collection points for students (on the Carnew Road) to be collected at after school.

After school arrangements -

- Matty Cousins buses will park in the bays on the Carnew Rd. (students to walk up via Gaelscoil lane).
- Smaller buses will park in front of school on the far side of the road
- Large buses (50 seater) to park outside the school gate on the near side of the road.

We would like to remind students to follow measures that the bus companies have put in place- queuing in a socially distant manner etc. We would like to encourage parents to park away from the school, if at all possible, and to get their children to walk to them. The less vehicles we have in front of the school the safer it is for everyone. Please take note that it is only cars that have a disabled parking permit that can park in the car park in front of the school.

Eating Areas

The eating areas are divided into separate sections indoors and each year group must sit and eat in their designated zones during their allotted breaks as follows. We are encouraging students to eat outside at morning break and lunchtime as much as possible to allow breaks from their face-coverings. It has been necessary to remove tables to maximise the available space. Additional seating has been provided outside. Please remind students that sharing of food is not permitted. Lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be washed thoroughly, inside and out, each day.

Canteen

Our canteen will remain open, however some changes are in place to avoid congestion and unnecessary contact for our students and canteen staff. The canteen will operate on a preorder basis. Orders can be placed in the morning before school from 08.15. We now have a cashless payment in operation and we request that you organise this method of payment for your child before school commences, e.g. Revolut card. However, cash is still accepted.

Lockers

Lockers will not be available for the moment to facilitate a deep clean. This will be reviewed on an on-going basis. We envisage that once the deep clean is completed, students will have access to lockers.

P.E.

Where possible, PE will take place outdoors and use of equipment will be confined to the sets for that class group. Classes may take additional breaks outside during the school day. All students will need to arrive in official PE uniform on the days they have PE. Sixth year students must wear full school uniform on the days they have P.E. (unless they have the official school tracksuit).

iPads

Students and teachers in Creagh College were very well positioned when school closures occurred as they each had their own device and were set up with an Office 365 account. This hugely facilitated remote learning and we saw some extremely creative work being shared among our school community. None of us know if we will be facing temporary school closures again, but if we do, we will be ready. It is essential that all students bring their charged iPad to school daily. We will be encouraging all teachers to

ensure students are set up on Microsoft Teams in the first few weeks back. Any queries relating to iPads can be sent to creaghcollegeipadhelp@wwetb.ie

Students' Equipment and Stationery

- Students should bring their own pens, pencils, colours etc. to school in their own pencil case to prevent the sharing of equipment.
- Students may be required to submit homework through Microsoft Teams and there will be training for this in the early stages of the school year.

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including computers and the equipment used for practical subjects. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products must be done by students before each use to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. Guidelines have issued to teachers of practical subjects to assist with this.

Student absences:

Same as before, parent/guardian writes a note in the absence section of the student's journal.

Student shows note to teacher in their journal at tutor time the next day.

PPE

The Department of Education advise that face masks must be worn by staff and students in post-primary schools where 2m social distance cannot be maintained. Students must wear a facemask where required and when asked to do so. Within our school community there are people who may have underlying health conditions or who live with family members with underlying health conditions and we must all do what is required to avoid COVID-19 coming into our community.

We encourage students to wear masks that they find comfortable, please ensure it is suitable and not offensive to others. Please have an adequate supply of masks for your son/daughter to facilitate washing etc.

Learning Support

In keeping with our special educational needs (SEN) policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class and small-group support. Initially, the focus will be primarily on welcoming the students back, giving them a chance to speak about how they feel, and establishing relationships

and routines. The provision of support will be organized to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of the minimum amount of interaction between students.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where students receive support in one of the SEN rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each student in the group. Only students from the same year group may be withdrawn together for SEN purposes
- The tables and chairs in SEN rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending. Where possible, resources in SEN settings will be stored in individual pouches for each student in order to limit sharing, and the pouches can then be wiped and sanitised.
- SNAs will continue to provide support and will wear appropriate PPE
- Please email creaghcollegesen@wwetb.ie with any concerns that you may have in relation to your son/daughter's additional learning needs.

Sports and extra-curricular activities

For the first couple of weeks our focus is on getting everyone back to school safely. Once we have all settled into our new routines. We will then examine which extra-curricular activities are feasible this year.

Ventilation

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces. To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible. CO2 monitors will be deployed in some rooms to monitor ventilation.

Assembly

Whole school assemblies will not take place for the foreseeable future.

Payments

We have an online payment system (WAY2PAY) that minimises the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for online payments. In the next few weeks, invoices will appear on WAY2PAY for individual year groups. You will receive a text message when the WAY2PAY invoice is live.

Corridors

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. Students should strictly follow the one-way systems, use the designated exit doors for their area, and use the toilet block designated to their year group. Students will be given details of the one-way system during induction.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, another member of staff will supervise the class.

Collection of Students during the School Day

Students should only leave the school during the school day in exceptional circumstances and this should be arranged in advance. Parents should write a note in the student's journal and this should be shown to the class tutor in the morning. If something unforeseen arises and a parent/guardian must collect a student during the school day without a prior arrangement, the following will apply

- Only one person can be in the reception area at any one time, and they must wear a mask. Please check the number of people in the reception area before entering.
- The student will be called from their class.
- The parent/guardian will be asked to sign the student out.

Students Who Should Not Attend School

If your son/daughter is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Students who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Students who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 (unless advised by the HSE that it is in order for them to do so – this may be the case with fully vaccinated students).
- Students who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Students who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid19, and the outcome of the test is pending (unless advised by the HSE that it is in order for them to do so – this may be the case with fully vaccinated students).
- Students with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.

- Staff or students who have been abroad in ‘high-risk countries’ SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL until they have fully complied with the current regulations around international travel (see HSE.ie)
- Students who are generally unwell.

Students with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school. If the school is notified that a person in your student’s class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19, public health advice will be sought and followed.

Illness and Absences

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Students should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a student displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately – please ensure all contact details are up to date and in use, and also provide the name and number of a contact who will be in a position to collect a student promptly. If you have changed address or phone number recently, it is imperative that you inform us creaghcollege@wwetb.ie
- The student will be accompanied to the designated isolation area by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic student and will also make sure that others always maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic student.
- An assessment will be made as to whether the student who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents who can then call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- If the student is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick student is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

We are not qualified to make a distinction between Covid 19 symptoms and symptoms of other illnesses. Be prepared. Make arrangements for your student to be collected in the event of a phone call.

First Year/new student specific questions:

1. Can I send in a bottle of sanitiser with my student? Yes, but please remind your student it is for personal use and it may only be used with the permission of the teacher. There will be sufficient quantities of sanitiser throughout the school.

2. Must my child wear a facemask? Staff and students are required to wear face covering where a physical distance of 2 m cannot be maintained. In our school this will be for a significant part of the school day.
3. Will parent/teacher meetings be taking place? We are awaiting further guidance on this.
4. What if I need to speak with my student's teacher? Please contact the school office or your student's teacher via email.
5. What happens if my student forgets their lunch or drinks or other items? Please do not arrive at the school and ask to give items to your child. If your child has forgotten Home Economics ingredients for example, they will not be allowed to participate in the practical that day.
6. What if my son/daughter is sent home with a suspected case of Covid 19? We would advise that you contact your GP/HSE and follow their advice.
7. Are parents permitted in the school building? No, not unless collecting a student presenting with Covid 19 symptoms or have received prior permission and have been invited in from the reception area/front door.
8. My son/daughter is in a base class with some other students, can they still interact with their other friends at break time? Yes, absolutely, students can still chat with students in other classes or year groups as long as they keep the distance from other students.
9. How will physical distance work in classrooms? At the start of the school year we will be distancing students as much as possible, with 1m between all students in all classrooms. This will not eliminate students from interacting with each other or prevent talk and discussion.
10. What happens if my son/daughter is injured while at school? Our first aid policy will be followed, but staff are required to wear PPE to apply first aid.
11. Will teachers talk to the students about Covid 19? Yes, from day one we will be re-teaching cough etiquette, hand hygiene, reinforcing the idea of social distancing/reduced physical

contact, and chatting about Covid 19. The aim will be on reassurance and promoting calmness and safety.

12. Will the students wear their uniform? Yes, it is business as normal in relation to uniform. On days your child has PE, they should wear their PE uniform.

13. Will the school be cleaned each day? Yes, and commonly touched surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day. Both staff and students will be responsible for cleaning their own work area each time they move to a new location.

14. What will be the most difficult issue for schools and parents? When students display symptoms of Covid 19. We will have to ring you and you will have to come and collect your child immediately. Your child will have to be brought to the isolation area. These are the government guidelines. We are not qualified to make a distinction between Covid 19 symptoms and symptoms of other illnesses. Be prepared. Make arrangements for your student to be collected in the event of a phone call.

15. Will this document be updated? Yes. It is an evolving situation and we will be constantly reviewing our procedures and may need to change elements of it when we observe it in practice. We will also be guided by current Public Health and DES advice.

Thank you for your continued support. We are looking forward to a safe and happy return to school for all of our students and staff.