



## General School Letter 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

A Thuiste, a chara,

The new school year has begun.

We thank all parents and guardians for making sure every student was ready to go back. We remind all students that they must have their own lunchbox and bring home their own rubbish and not to forget their own hand sanitizers. All students that they should have at least two masks with them every day especially during bad weather. We also thank parents for adhering to our request that an appointment must be made when coming to the school and not to bring forgotten items up to the school, nor will we deliver messages to students in class.

Our students are doing really well, and we thank them for their really excellent cooperation. There are still a few small changes we have to make which are only coming to light as the school goes through a full week. We will work on them and continue to do our best for the safety and health of all in Salesian College.

Teachers will work out a rota for bringing in books – this will take another week to get fully organised. We are aware of the weight of school bags especially for first years.

To reduce congestion for the first years we are going to let them out just a few minutes before the bell at the end of the school day for a few days just to help them settle in to a much bigger and busier school.

### ***Do Not Come to School if Feeling Unwell***

We remind all parents that students should not be sent to school if feeling unwell in any way.

### ***Social Distancing***

We ask all parents and guardians to discuss with your son the reasons and medical importance of social distancing. It is clear to us here in the school that students are finding this challenging especially on their way to and from school. This change to behaviour is one that has to be made amongst the younger population and we all have to work together on this. I ask all parents and guardians to discuss this with your son this evening.

### ***Earphones***

As part of the new systems we ask all students to bring in a pair of earphones with them every day. Students should bring simple plug-in earphones as opposed to wireless headphones or ear plugs. Students will need these for use in the overflow area to listen to the teacher's lesson.

### ***Leaving Certificate 2020 - Calculated Grades***

On behalf of all the teachers and students, we would like to congratulate our Leaving Certificate students of 2020. We congratulate Sean Byrne and Eoghan Manning who achieved the highest Leaving Certificate

results. Both students are excellent examples of students who worked regularly and consistently over the years. We are delighted with their amazing well-deserved results.

At the time of writing, we hope all our students have been successful in their third level choices. Over the next two weeks Ms. Harris, Career and Guidance Counsellor will contact the Leaving Certificate students of 2020 to confirm which third level placement they were offered and accepted. We wish them every success as they progress on their educational paths. We are delighted with our Leaving Certificate results this year. It is evident that sustained, regular and consistent work and full school attendance are key to a successful Leaving Certificate.

### ***Guidance Counselling Department***

Our school Guidance and Counselling Department has a new website accessible through the Guidance and Counselling tab on the school website. There is useful information on supports for Mental Health as well as updates and news on career events/open days, workshops, and lots of general information on career guidance which will be helpful for all students.

Parents/guardians may contact the guidance counsellors at any time during the school term to request advice or support however we ask that this is done by contacting us by phone only and during the school day.

### ***Contacting the school***

The school journal should be used for notes for the school. If you wish to discuss something of a delicate or sensitive nature, please put this in a private letter to the school. Please do not email the school.

### ***Punctuality***

Now that all schools are open the traffic on the roads in the morning is much busier. **I ask all students to review the time they leave home for school in the morning.** Given the new arrangements and different access points for students throughout the school campus it is really important now for all students to be on the school premises by 8.40am at the latest.

All students who arrive late to school must enter by the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Resource area entrance and have their late arrival recorded by Deputy Principal or Teacher on duty. A written note of explanation from parents/guardians is required from all students arriving late to school at any time during the day. Students who arrive late to school more than once in a five-day period without an explanatory note in the school journal will be assigned an afterschool detention. Students who arrive late to school three times without an explanatory note will be assigned a Saturday detention. The school will not accept letters from parents excusing punctuality breaches the following day. A late arrival to class is recorded as a late note.

Students who complete a Saturday detention and are subsequently late again and there is no evidence of improvement will be sent home immediately. Parents/Guardians will be contacted to inform them of this, and the student is not to return to school without an explanatory note from their parents/guardians. Parents will be informed of this in the letter sent home to notify them of a Saturday detention.

### ***Cycling Safely to School***

We are delighted with the high number of students who are cycling to school. Please do so safely. As traffic and the roads are getting busier it is really important for students to be careful on their bicycles and all

students must wear a helmet. We plan to extend the bike enclosure in the next few weeks to accommodate the large number of students travelling to school on their bikes.

### ***Journal & VS Ware Notes***

We remind all parents to check their son's journal and to sign it. All first years must have their journals signed every night for first year. This term we will start using our VS Ware system for the recording of notes relating to punctuality, classroom behaviour, homework, and class participation. We know that this system has proved very successful in other schools so we will start using it immediately. We will give parents access rights to this once we have the system set up and ready to go.

### ***Afterschool Study & Evening Study***

We are looking at the feasibility of supervised study for this term. It is our wish that it does go ahead as it has proved an invaluable system for our students to work consistently and steadily throughout the year. I can advise now that if it does go ahead that there will be an increase in price, however we will do our very best to ensure that it is realistic and not an extra burden on parents and families who are already under a lot of pressure due to Covid-19 pressures.

### ***VS Ware & Easypayments***

I would like to clarify for parents and guardians that VS Ware and Easypayments are separate administrative systems. There is some confusion and parents are logging on with the same log in or password. There is a re-set password option on Easypayments if you have forgotten your password – you do not need to contact the school. Please keep a note of the separate and different log in and passwords.

### ***Wellbeing for our Students and Staff***

In keeping with our school ethos of “We care , we develop, we believe – together we achieve” , along with the physical and administrative changes in the school as result of Covid-19 we have also planned a targeted wellbeing programme for all our students and staff. I thank our Guidance and chaplaincy teams for their work.

This programme has and will include the following:

- Induction Programme on Health and Safety
- Wellbeing Talk at Induction Day on how to support all students on a return to school and resources and guidelines issued by the DES made available to all staff
- Year Head Assemblies on first day back with a focus on self-care on returning to school
- Extended form classes to support students on a return to school
- Pastoral Care Team speaking to all students in their form classes to advise on self-care and how to access counselling support in the school
- SPHE lessons on Returning to School provided by the NCCA being covered by SPHE teachers in all year groups
- Guidance Counsellors to support Sixth Year students on their return to school.
- Individual appointments already started and available to all on request.
- Talk during Induction Programme on the impact of Covid-19 on Sixth Class and coping with the issues this may have brought Second follow on lesson delivered on Mental Health by the guidance and counsellor focusing on dealing with anxious feelings and worries

- Second Year Interviews to begin next week with a focus on supporting students on their return to school
- Wellbeing material being delivered to all students via their form classes to include “50 Ways to relax” to encourage self-care

### ***Relationships and Sexuality Education***

We would like to let all our parents and guardians know as we begin another academic year that we continue to provide SPHE (Social, Personal and health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) to all our students. We will continue with SPHE as a module in our Transition Year programme with a focus on Wellbeing on their return to school and RSE.

A very important part of our SPHE programme is the teaching of RSE which all our students in each year group have access to. A key focus of our RSE programme is teaching about and promoting healthy relationships including their rights, responsibilities in relationships and respect for each other. We follow the curriculum outlined by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and follow appropriate guidelines and circulars relevant to SPHE/ RSE as set out by the Department of Education and Skills.

Last year we completed a review of our policy and plans, and we will continue to develop this subject area in order to best meet the needs of our students.

If you would like any further information on SPHE/RSE please contact Ms. Harris (our co-ordinator) or you can view all information and curricula related to SPHE/RSE online at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

### ***Parents' Association Meeting Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September & AGM 6<sup>th</sup> October***

I would like to take this opportunity to invite our new parents of first year students and indeed other year groups to get involved and make a valuable contribution to the school community and join our Parents Association. We have a very active Parents Association and wish to maintain the important role they have in the effective running of the school. As parents, you play an integral role in your son's education. We would like to thank all our parents for their work in ensuring that students were well prepared for school and this has led to a good and organised start to the year.

The first meeting of the year for the Parents Association will take place on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 8.00pm. This meeting will take place on Zoom and the access code will be emailed to the Parents Association members in advance.

At the Annual General Meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup> we will ask our parents to nominate two new members for the Board of Management of Salesian College. We sincerely thank Ms. Geraldine O’Sullivan and Mr. John Lynam who have done an exceptional job on your behalf. We will advise parents in advance of how this nomination and election process will take place once we have the meeting details confirmed.

On behalf of all the teachers and members of staff we wish our students a happy, safe, healthy and productive new year.

Is mise, le meas,

Ms. B. Kearns, Príomhoide.