



Mulroy College

Colaiste Na Maoile Ruaidhe

Milford, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Baile Na nGallóglach, Leitir Ceannainn, Co. Dhún na nGall



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dhún na nGall
Donegal Education and Training Board

20th August 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

As we are in the final stages of preparation for the full reopening of Mulroy College next week I wanted to send a few reminders and final updates.

Currently we are working to implement the “Reopening Our Schools - The Roadmap for the Full Return to School”. The measures set out in the Public Health Advice are

“aimed at risk minimization of COVID-19, for young people, teachers, other staff, their families and the wider community, recognizing the importance of education for health and well-being and that free primary education provided by the State is a fundamental right guaranteed by the constitution” and provides clear guidance for safe school operation through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in schools, predicated on two general recommendations:

1. Minimising the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community; and
2. Managing the risk of spread if introduced through:
 - Regular and good hand hygiene.
 - Good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
 - Enhanced cleaning regimes.
 - Maintaining physical distancing in the classroom and within schools.

Our main focus is for everyone to return to school and to return safely. As we progress through the year it will be important that we all remain vigilant at all times and always adhere to the guidelines given and the procedures now in place.

Stay at Home if Unwell

“No person (child, teacher or parent) should attend an educational setting if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19”.

Anyone feeling sick or presenting with any symptoms of Covid 19 **must not** attend school. If anyone presents or develops symptoms while in school, they will be brought immediately to our isolation room and we will contact home, they must be collected immediately. At this point you must contact your GP by phone and the HSE will manage all contact tracing necessary following a positive result.

Any student putting anyone at risk and not adhering to procedures will also be asked to remain at home.

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Maintaining Physical Distancing in Schools

The Public Health Advice sets out the “the principle of distancing can be usefully applied in the school setting, allowing for some flexibility when needed whilst noting that it must be applied in a practical way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue”.

In terms of maintaining physical distancing, measures outlined in the Public Health Advice fall into two broad categories:

- a. Increasing separation;
- b. Decreasing interaction between students themselves, between students and staff and between staff when they are together;

It also important to recognises that:

- care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times; and
- staff will not always be able to maintain physical distance from their students and it is not appropriate that they would be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the student or the learning and health and safety of other students.

Students and teachers will walk on the right side of the corridors, in single file. There will be clear signage on all corridors to outline where everyone should be walking. No one is permitted to stand around the corridors unless this is a designated zone for them during a break or lunch. This will be explained and outlined during the students’ induction programme.

What school will be like when they reopen

On your son/daughter’s first day in Mulroy College this academic year, they either go to the canteen for the breakfast club or directly to the gym to wait for their induction. Students are no longer permitted to wait in corridors before class in the morning and are to go directly to their registration room.

A reminder that all students must wear a face mask/shield and we request that masks are as plain as possible and appropriate within a school setting. Snoods are not permitted.

Timetables will be available for all parents to access next week online, you will receive a text about this and all students can plan what they need for their first day in school.

There will be no sharing of books, pens, utensils of any kind so please ensure all pencil cases are fully stocked for the day. I would also request each student to **carry their own small bottle of hand sanitiser and tissues** throughout the day. **Coughing and sneezing etiquette** is also important and all students are reminded to use a tissue and then throw the tissue in the bin.

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The canteen will be in operation and cash will be used initially, we are working on a **cashless system** with our supplier which will take **a few weeks to set up**. Please be aware there is limited seating and I strongly **advise** everyone to bring their **own packed lunches** with them.

Lockers will **not be issued** to students initially and we will monitor this as we proceed. Timetables have been greatly adjusted to ensure students have a reduced number of subjects each day to allow for this measure to be implemented.

School Transport

The School Transport Scheme services operated by Bus Éireann on behalf of the DES will fully operate as normal, in line with public health advice. In planning for normal resumption of school transport services the following considerations have been taken into account:

- School transport services are controlled environments.
- Each transport service carries the same children on a daily basis to their school of attendance.
- It is a restricted group of transport users which will facilitate contact tracing if required.

Observing hygiene requirements will be a key priority and clear communication to all parents of children or to older students using school transport services will set out the following requirements for those travelling on school transport:

1. Not to use school transport if they are displaying symptoms.
2. To maintain physical distancing while waiting for school transport in the morning and afternoon.
3. To always sit in pre-assigned seating and next to a sibling or child from their class group (this should be the same child at all times).
4. To use hand sanitizer on boarding the bus.
5. To observe respiratory etiquette at all times while waiting for and on-board transport services.
6. To disembark the bus one by one in an orderly fashion;
7. Students travelling on the post-primary scheme are required to wear facemasks while waiting for transport and on-board transport services.

Supporting the Wellbeing of School Communities

The wellbeing of our school community is a fundamental element of Mulroy College's plan to ensure a successful return to school as we continue to manage the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are living through exceptional times and this impacts on the wellbeing of everyone in different ways.

People are naturally worried about the risk to their physical health and that of their loved ones and have been challenged by the public health measures that were put in place to control the spread of the virus, such as staying at home and school closures. **Students have an inbuilt capacity to adapt. This is what is at the heart of resilience.**

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Most people are weathering this storm and will emerge stronger and with new skills. Most respond really well to information and practical advice on new ways of managing and staying active and connected. Some will, for a variety of reasons, struggle a little to adapt and will need greater levels of practical and social support to make the adjustments needed to stay well.

We are now preparing for the reopening of schools. We know that most students, and indeed their families and school staff will be looking forward to going back, reconnecting with school, reconnecting with staff and friends and settling back into school work. This will be a time of change, with new rules and routines to learn, in order to keep everyone safe.

Some students may feel worried about returning to school, and that's normal. Most will, however, re-engage with little difficulty after an initial settling in period. In supporting Wellbeing, the DES has developed and prepared a comprehensive response to supporting the wellbeing of school communities. This is guided by five essential principles for wellbeing promotion at times like this which are promoting:

1. A sense of safety
2. A sense of calm
3. A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
4. A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
5. A sense of hope

These principles are widely accepted and explicitly recommended as protective factors to support **optimal returning to routine and wellbeing** in the aftermath of an emergency situation. We will post additional material for all members of the school community in the coming weeks to support the Wellbeing of our School Community.

Access to the building

As we are limiting the number of face to face meetings please email or ring the school and someone will return your call as soon as possible or communicate with you in a timely manner. **No one can gain access to the building without an arranged appointment.**

We are very much looking forward to the school year ahead and although there are many changes and challenges we have all adjusted to so much over the last few months. **I am confident** that we all too can adjust to a new way of working in school and concentrate on the core business of what we do, **teaching and learning.**

I am confident in the team of teachers and staff here in Mulroy College that they will remain as dedicated and focused to ensure your child receives the highest standards of education. As always we rely on your support and more than ever we will need that this year. Please take time to go through all the details I have listed in this letter and in the previous correspondence. I hope this will prepare us all for the changes ahead but also get us focusing

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more quickly on your child's education. I urge you to support us in these challenging times and I look forward to our continued partnership with our parents moving forward.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Temple
Principal.

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