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Notification to all Parents / Guardians / Students

We have completed four full weeks of the return to school and acknowledging the continuing reality of the environment we are living in, there is much to celebrate in this.

Thank you to all members of staff, students and parents / guardians for the commitment that has been shown by all to allow us reach this point.

As we are now fully returned to school at both a local and national level, as opposed to when we were operating in 'Lockdown', we need to reset some of our protocols for daily routine and ensure clarity to allow sustained normal daily operations to occur.

Communications with and expectations of school:

- Parents/ Guardians are asked to ensure that contact with Abbey Community College occurs between 08.30 and 16.30 Monday to Friday only. Under the current guidelines, no parent can arrive at the school building without having a previous appointment. Any correspondence for teachers should be addressed via the office email which will then be forwarded directly on to teachers by the administration staff. Email info@abbeycommunitycollege.com for enquiries.
- Students should not contact teachers directly by email, Teams or other virtual platforms unless by prior agreement with the teacher and then within the 08.30 – 16.30 timeframe only. Please be reminded that teachers may not reply until the next working day within working hours.
- If parents/ guardians need to notify that their child is absent from school for any reason, please do so by email or phone. Administration staff cannot 'page' or call students during class time so please ensure that your son/daughter is aware of the time that he/she is to be collected. We are currently receiving a large volume of calls coming into the office and we have added an extra phone line to deal with the volume of calls. Please deal directly with the Year Head via email for absences and with the bursar for financial matters leaving the phonelines free for general calls and enquiries.

Absences:

- **If absences continue for an extended duration due to Covid-19, teachers will utilise a range of means ensuring that students stay up to date with work which may include online interaction but will not include class by class remote learning through each day.** The DES has provided clarity to all schools that an online timetable can only be provided in circumstances where a whole class, a whole year has had to be sent home or the entire school has been closed as a consequence of Covid - 19.
- The DES has also now provided national Guidelines for the specific circumstances of supporting ongoing learning for students who are within the detailed boundary of *At Very High Risk of Covid -19*. This is a specific categorisation for whom ongoing teaching support will be provided.
- In line with the recommendations, I wish to remind parents/guardians that in the event of their child requiring a test for Covid-19, that they notify the relevant Year Head / Deputy Principal to set a provisional return to school date.

Face Coverings / Sanitiser / Wipes / Social Distancing

Facemasks: Continuous wearing of facemasks is a key means of preventing the spread of Covid-19. Student compliance with this requirement is essentially very good. Thank you to all our students for this.

Some requests re. facemasks to ensure that our current high standards are maintained.

- 1) Make sure that your facemask fits your face: neither too large or too small.
- 2) Face coverings must cover the wearer's nose or they are not being worn properly.
- 3) Students have spare masks in their bags for the day in case of an emergency and also to ensure that they change their masks when necessary. We have provided every student with two reusable masks that they can wash overnight. Students are free to wear their own masks also if they wish to do so.

Sanitiser and wipes: Some students have chosen to bring their own wipes and sanitiser to school. Each student is responsible for sanitising their seats and desks before and after use. The school provides paper and a disinfectant spray, however if your son/daughter wishes to bring their own pack of disinfectant wipes and sanitiser, they are free to use them instead of the school supplied disinfectant and sanitiser.

Social Distancing: We are finding that while students are inside the school buildings that they are generally adhering to social distancing etiquette. However, the situation is not as good when students are outside of the building before and after school. We are noting an improvement in recent days with social distancing outside of our school building. We understand that it is difficult to remember all the new rules and regulations re. Covid-19 but we would urge you as students to adhere to social distancing routines in your daily lives in an effort to stop the spread of Covid-19.

As the winter months approach, we are advising our students to add extra layers of clothing underneath their uniforms – ventilation of our buildings and fresh air breaks are integral components of our safe return to school. The school jacket is now compulsory for all students after the staggered introduction over the last few years. Students can wear their school jackets if they wish to do so in class. If students are still feeling cold (with the additional base layers beneath the uniform, the school uniform itself and the school jacket), they may wear their own coats also over the school jacket.

As a community, we have a societal responsibility to follow the public health advice so as that we can look forward to continuing with sustained normal daily routines in school where our primary focus is on teaching and learning for the entire school community. Your continued support in ensuring we can do so, as set out within this notification, will be very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Michelle Jefford

Principal