



24<sup>th</sup> September, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope you are all well at this time and have had a good week since my last correspondence.

We are settling back into school life at this stage and are really beginning to adjust to our new ways of working. I thank you all for supporting all our efforts at this time.

**Importance of being prepared:** Over the past few weeks, we have all heard of schools around the country which have been affected directly by a positive case(s) of Covid-19. It is important that we are all as prepared as possible should such a situation arise for St. Mary's. Therefore, the following is a reminder of the information shared last week in relation to what will happen if your child/member of staff is confirmed positive for Covid-19:

- Once a case of Covid-19 is confirmed, the HSE will begin the process of contact tracing. From this point onwards, the process will be led by the Public Health HSE.
- All parents/guardians should note that:
  - The school cannot take any action in relation to exclusion, part closure or full closure, unless the Public Health HSE determine that the action is required.
  - If any action of this nature is required, the HSE will liaise with the school to provide clear guidance to the school community.
  - If the school has not been contacted by the Public Health HSE in relation to a confirmed case in the school community, then contact with the school has not been deemed necessary.
- There is no doubt that it is a distressing time for families who are dealing with a suspected or confirmed case and all pupils and staff and their families are entitled to confidentiality. The school cannot and will not make the name of a pupil or staff member with a suspected or confirmed case known to the public.
- Unfortunately, we have no control over exchanges on social media, where information based on hearsay is shared. We would respectfully request that parents who choose to communicate about this issue on social media should consider how these comments could be misinterpreted. Please refrain from naming pupils and/ or staff and their families on these platforms.

#### **School work while isolating as a result of HSE advice:**

For pupils who have been advised by HSE to self-isolate for period in excess of one week:

- In lieu of additional school work, class homework will be provided
- The class homework for the period of absence will be shared with the parent via Aladdin Connect/SeeSaw
- This homework will be based on the work being completed by the class at the time of the pupil being required to self-isolate.
- Correction of work will be completed by the class teacher via Aladdin Connect/SeeSaw

As per school protocol in relation to any illness, when a pupil is isolating as a result of testing positive for Covid-19, no work will be assigned. **The completion of the homework assigned during the period of self-isolation is at the discretion of the pupil's parent/guardian.**

**Ventilation:** All schools have been issued with practical steps for the deployment of good ventilation practices in schools. We have been advised that the opening of windows to introduce fresh air is very important. As we move towards colder days, heating in the school will, of course, be turned on but parents are also advised that it is a good idea for pupils to wear a vest/body warmer under their uniform/tracksuit.

**Homework:** As outlined last week, all class teachers will be in touch before Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September in relation to the format of homework for their class this term.

**Seesaw:** Sincere thanks to all families who have provided consent for the use of the online learning platform Seesaw this year. If you have not yet viewed the permission page you are asked to do so at your earliest convenience.

**Sacraments:** Congratulations and best wishes to all our girls from the class of 2020 who will be confirmed on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> September at 2 separate ceremonies. We hope the girls and their families enjoy a lovely day.

Wishing you all a safe and happy week.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Fiona O'Callaghan

Principal