



Presentation College

Headford

Co. Galway

Tel: 093 35408

Fax: 093 35532

e-mail: office@presheadford.ie

Web: www.presheadford.ie

August 13th 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

It has certainly proven an eventful summer!

Nevertheless, we hope you and your families have had a safe and enjoyable summer break. We are all delighted to welcome our students and staff back to the school for the new academic year, and are looking forward to hearing the halls of PCH ring out with chat and laughter once again (albeit in keeping with public health and social distancing guidelines!). In doing so, we embrace the new teaching and learning world that we will all inhabit this year. The warm PCH community spirit and focus on student wellbeing and *Being the Best You Can Be* will still be the same as ever as we adjust everything we do to adhere to public health advice. We are aware of the effects of remote teaching and learning on the curriculum and will be embedding core skills for all students at the start of the year.

The dedicated team in PCH have already met, planned and activated the return to school plan which places student and staff safety at the centre of everything we do. In a school as large as PCH reopening safely is a herculean task, given the nature of the building and the fact that we have over 800 students on our roll this year. We have been inundated with kind offers of help and assistance from parents throughout our catchment area, and we are now writing to ask you all for your help and support in achieving a safe, happy and productive return for our young people.

There will be many changes when students return to us. There have been some difficult decisions made over the past 3 weeks since the issue of definitive government guidance. As you have come to know over the past year, it is our policy as a management team to wait for government guidance, engage in extensive consultation with all our partners in education; you, the parents, the students and the staff before seeking ratification from the Board of Management and making any public pronouncements. However, given the urgency of the task we now face-reopening PCH safely in a matter of four short and very busy weeks, we have been forced to make a number of decisions based on government guidance, without wide-ranging consultation with you, our partners in the educational enterprise in PCH. We hope you will support and trust these decisions are being made with the health and welfare of everyone as paramount.

Reconfiguration of the School Day

First, the reconfiguration of the school day. The school day will now begin at **9.00am** and finish at **4.00pm Monday to Thursday**. School will start at **9.00 am** on **Friday** and finish at **1.20pm**. This decision was not taken lightly. The health and safety of our students and staff is paramount. Providing adequate supervision is always a challenge and this reconfiguration goes some way to reducing supervision issues. We realise this has implications for each family, hence our decision to inform you as soon as possible. The school buses have been informed and will be running.



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School Day

Monday to Thursday	9.00am to 4.00pm
Friday	9.00 am to 1.20pm

Secondly, where possible and in keeping with DES advice we will seek to timetable for double periods. This will limit the number of class changes that students will have to make.

Thirdly, there will also be a staggered lunchtime in designated yearly zones to assist in monitoring social distancing- times to be advised upon return to school. Similarly, for the academic year 2020-21 we will allow **all** senior students (TY, 5th & 6th Year) downtown for lunch during their designated lunch slot only. **Usual school rules will apply.**

	1st	2nd	3rd	TY*	5th*	6th*
Break	11-11.20	11.40-12	11-11.20	11.40-12	11.40-12	11-11.20
Lunch	1.20-2.00	2.00-2.40	1.20-2.00	2.00-2.40	2.00-2.40	1.20-2.00

There will be **no** reduction of tuition time.

Timetables

Timetables will be delayed this year as necessary changes have to be made. You will be notified as soon as they are available on VSWARE.



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Return to School Schedule

Return to school dates are staggered to ensure a full induction for all students including on COVID procedures

Date	
Thursday, August 27 th	Essential Staff Inservice- Return to School (no students)
Friday, August 28 th	Essential Staff Inservice- Return to School (no students)
Monday, August 31 st	First Years only 9am-4pm
Tuesday, September 1 st	Leaving Certificates (LCA included) only 9am-4pm
Wednesday, September 2 nd	Third Years only 9am-4pm
Thursday, September 3 rd	TY & Fifth Years only 9am-4pm
Friday, September 4 th	Second Years only
Monday, September 7 th	Leaving Cert results issued 1st Years only in school 9.00am-4.00pm On-line learning for 2nd, 3rd, TY, 5th and LC students
Tuesday, September 8 th	Essential Staff in-service On-line learning for 2nd, 3rd, TY, 5th and LC students. (1st Year students at home)
Wednesday, September 9 th	All students return



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New COVID Return to School Protocols

Masks/Face-Coverings

As announced by Minister Foley on August 7th facemasks will be compulsory in post primary settings. Students will have to provide their own facemasks and it would be prudent to start buying some now. We would suggest that spare face masks be kept in the student's bag at all times in Ziploc bags. We ask that masks are plain in design and should not display any inappropriate images or slogans.

Arriving and Departing from School

The first bell goes at 8.50 am each morning. Students must be in their base classrooms (see below) by this time. Teachers will register the roll on VSWARE and a member of the senior management team will visit the base classrooms to check the roll, register any late-comers and carry out a check uniform. We appreciate your co-operation in this regard as lateness has a serious negative impact on learning and teaching in the classroom.

All students are encouraged where possible to walk or cycle to school. Please also ensure that your child's bike has a lock and that he/she wears a helmet and high visibility clothing when cycling. We are investigating the policy of installing bicycle racks. **Where possible we ask that you drop your child off in the town and that they walk down to school.** This would greatly assist us in managing the flow of students safely into the building and into their designated zone and classroom.

Zones/Base Classrooms

Each year group will be designated a zone within the school (to be advised upon return). Each class group will be assigned a base class-room and each student assigned a designated seat. Your child will go directly to this seat on arrival to school. There will be a one-way system throughout the school and each year group will be informed about their designated exit and entry point to the school.

Lockers

In the interest of health and safety and in our attempts to adhere to public health social distancing guidelines, lockers will not be in use for the academic year. Students will take their bags to their base classroom, storing them safely underneath their desks. We urge our students to ensure they only have the books they need for each day in their bags. Please ensure all books and materials are clearly labelled. Further detailed guidelines to follow.

Canteen

A limited canteen **Lunch Only** service will be available catering prepacked food (sandwiches/Rolls/fruit etc). Orders will be taken by canteen staff from the base classroom in the morning and delivered to the base classroom. A cashless payment system is being organised by the vendors. Further details of this will be made available in the coming weeks. Junior



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students will need to bring their own lunch with them if not purchasing from the canteen. **All students** will need to bring a mid-morning snack as there will be no services available. As advised above, senior students will be permitted down the town during their allotted lunch period. We trust our students to adhere to school rules, to uphold their own good name in their behaviour while up the town, and also the reputation of the grey and navy! Due to hygiene restrictions, there will be no access to water fountains in the school. It is advisable for students to keep a personal water beaker in their bag. We kindly request that no plastic bottles be used.

Uniform

Full school uniform will be worn to school each day. Advice regarding proper PE attire and changing facilities to follow. While uniforms do not need to be washed every evening, more frequent washing may be advisable. Please ensure that your child has all their uniform clearly marked with their name.

Access to the School Buildings for Parents and Visitors

Per government advice, visitors to the building must ring ahead, make an appointment, and upon arrival wait outside the door to be greeted by a member of staff. **We do not like to have to do this as we pride ourselves on our welcoming atmosphere and open-door policy.** However, in the interest of our children's and our teacher's health we must insist that all visitors make an appointment before coming to the school. Orla, Ciarán and I try our very best to maintain a 'next day return policy' on your phone and email queries. We hope that you have always found this to be the case. At any stage you can email office@presheadford.ie and our wonderful administration staff Margaret, Bernie and Joan will ensure that your query/concern is directed appropriately.

Drop off Box

A drop off box will be installed outside the entrance to the school. If you need to drop off an item of clothing, lunchbox, forgotten equipment etc, please ring the office and inform them you will be leaving the item in the drop off box.

Contacting your child during the school day

Parents should communicate with the secretary's office if they wish to make urgent contact with their child during the school day. We ask for your full support in this. Students are required to keep phones switched off and in their bag during class time and are not permitted to use their phones on the school premises **unless** authorised by staff for educational or other specified purposes.

Contact Details

Please ensure we have up to date contact details for you (home address, phone numbers, email address and emergency contact numbers). Now more than ever, this is of paramount importance!



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Code of Behaviour

All parents and students must sign the Code of Positive Behaviour (COB) upon enrolment. These are exceptional times and they require exceptional measures. Our COB will be amended to reflect the changes outlined above and/or other public health advice issued in the coming weeks and months. These changes will be communicated to all members of our learning community through the usual channels (school website) and will be in keeping with guidance and prescribed advice from the Joint Managerial Body (JMB) and the DES. Signing our COB upon enrolment serves as an acceptance of **any necessary changes**. Breaches of these protocols will be treated seriously. We ask for your full co-operation in this matter.

High Risk Students-

As you are aware, Ms Jackson (Deputy Principal) has been contacting families of students who may be at higher risk, please contact Orla at orlajackson.dp@presheadford.ie if you have any concerns or worries about your child's health and their return to school. Similarly, please advise us if your child has a medical condition or any allergies if you have not already done so. We will be contacting you again in relation to underlying student medical conditions when the DES release the relevant documentation.

Student Services Fee

PCH is a voluntary Catholic secondary school, this means that we are not as well funded as schools in other sectors. We rely heavily on your payment of the Student Services Fee to the running of our school. This payment goes some way to covering the cost of providing essential services in the school. As ever, your generosity is overwhelming and appreciated. Our revenue will be reduced even further this year as we will not be in a position to offer after-school study facilities or rent our school facilities to outside groups. However, we are cognisant of the fact that we will not be able to offer locker rental to our students this year and as such we will be reducing the fee to reflect this;

1 Student	€120
2 + Students	€170 (max cost per family)

***We are introducing 'Easy payments Plus', a convenient online payment system- more details to follow.**

And finally (for now...)

As we continue to plan and put many more COVID protocols in place in an evolving situation we are hopeful that we can provide a positive and safe learning environment for your child. We acknowledge the many challenges that your child may face following a long absence from the usual school routines and I assure that we will do everything we can to reintegrate your child back into the warm community here in PCH, and that we will support them on this journey.



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There will be challenges, but we are all in this together, and we will continue to work as a team to provide the best for our students. I will forward you all other relevant information at a later date and as it emerges.

We wish to thank you for your continued support and co-operation and a happy and healthy academic year.

Yours in education,


Aisling McAlpine
Principal


Mary Hoade
Chairperson BOM


Ciarán Ryan
Deputy Principal


Orla Jackson
Deputy Principal