

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont

Return to School Guidelines

20th August 2020

Introduction

Dear Students, Parents & Guardians,

As we look forward to welcoming all our students back to school there have been many new procedures and arrangements put in place to ensure that our reopening is as safe and orderly as possible, for our entire school community.

The details of the changes made are detailed below and are in accordance with the most up-to-date information available to us from the Department of Education & Skills.

All of the new procedures will be explained to students at their assembly and there will be additional supervision and further reminders in the opening weeks of school.

All of our arrangements will be stringently monitored and reviewed as needed. Be aware that information may change please ensure that our office has the most up-to-date contact information including mobile phone numbers and email addresses.

If you are unsure, please email your details secretary@mercybeaumont.com immediately.

Please continue to check our website www.mercybeaumont.com and Twitter

https://twitter.com/Mercy_Beau to stay up-to-date with information and changes.

Face masks

As stated in the government guidelines, all students (& staff) must bring a face mask with them to school and wear it when indoors where a 2 metre physical distance is not possible.

These will not be supplied by the school but additional masks may be available.

All classrooms have been reconfigured to provide a minimum distance of 1 metre between adjacent students and also between students and their teacher - masks or face shields will be required in our classrooms.

Students will not be permitted to enter the school without their mask (or face shield) - this is to protect all members of our school community.

See details on the correct usage of face coverings [here](#).

One-Way System

We have put in place a strict one-way system of movement for all of our corridors. The more spacious parts of our school which retain a two-way system will have a keep-left rule. This will be clearly indicated and explained to students in detail.

Arrival at School

Our school will be open for students from 8am each morning. We encourage students to walk or cycle where possible. If students are driven to school, in cars with occupants from more than 1 household, masks should be worn. We kindly remind drivers - for the safety of our students - not to enter school grounds or to park on the 'zig-zag' markings near the school gates.

Students will be able to enter the school by either the middle doors (below the deputy principal's office) or by the doors of the 'glass area' (at rear of sports hall).

Students are encouraged to go to their lockers as quickly as physical distancing will allow and then proceed to either their base room or their first class as appropriate.

Base Rooms

To minimise interactions, students in 1st & 2nd Year groups and Transition Year will be allocated a base room for classes in their core subjects. These rooms will also be used for roll call and breaks as needed.

Lockers

We are happy to have been able to retain the use of student lockers through the implementation of a new layout and allocation system. Lockers have been spaced further apart and are no longer grouped together by Year Group. Students from each year group will access their lockers throughout the school at staggered times to ensure physical distancing.

Students are expected to be considerate of others while at their lockers, they must observe social distancing when waiting their turn to use their locker, wear a mask and be as quick as possible.

Toilets

Each Year Group (1st Years, 2nd Years etc.) is assigned their own toilets. In order to minimise interactions, students are not permitted to use the toilet of any other year group. Toilets will have maximum capacity signage and a strict queuing system will be in place.

Break time /Roll Call

Students will be encouraged to have their break in their tutor rooms / base rooms or outside (weather permitting). We must avoid groups of students congregating indoors as it may be difficult for them to maintain physical distancing.

Lunchtime

Only 5th & 6th Year students will be permitted to leave our school campus at lunchtime. This will be strictly enforced. Senior students must exit the school using the main door (near the Principal's office) and return using the middle doors.

Students who remain in school will be encouraged to eat lunch in their base rooms or outside - weather permitting. The canteen and assembly hall will also be available with physical distancing in place and no interactions between different year groups permitted. Our vending machine has been fitted with a contactless payment option, sanitiser dispenser and a protective film placed over the buttons, it has been rotated to allow space for queuing and additional supervision will be provided.

Please Note: Students must be responsible for putting their own lunch/break waste into the appropriate bin. School staff and other students cannot be exposed to unnecessary risk by picking up or touching other people's belongings. Students are themselves responsible for leaving the seat/area they were in clean and free from debris/spillages

Additional supervision will be in place to help students to adhere to our new systems.

Uniform

Students will be permitted to wear the full school tracksuit to school on their designated PE day **only**. Changing rooms are not available. In all other cases students will be expected to wear their full school uniform in line with our Code of Behaviour. This will facilitate additional washing of the uniform as needed and minimise belongings / contact points around our school.

Visiting the school

Parents/Guardians are not permitted to enter the school building without a prior appointment documented with the Principal. The school office will only be open in circumstances where business could not be transacted via email, over the phone or by post. This means that parents are no longer permitted to enter the building to drop off items that their child has forgotten or to collect their daughter before finishing time without prior arrangement. Parents, who have an appointment, must wear a face mask upon entering the building and have their details recorded in the contact tracing log.

Parents & guardians are requested not to attend our school if they themselves are unwell.

Homework & submission of Schoolwork

We will continue to make use of Google Classroom. This will facilitate safe, contactless submission of homework and assignments. It is imperative that all students join their classes as directed by their teachers. For guidelines, please refer to the Best Practice document on the use of IT including school email & Google Classroom recently sent to you or [click here](#).

First Year and other new students will be given detailed guidance on this and assisted as needed at induction.

Miscellaneous Health & Safety Information

Students should not attend / be sent to school when unwell or showing any [symptoms](#).

Parents/Guardians of students who have a serious underlying condition should contact their GP for guidance on returning to school.

An isolation room has been set up for students who begin to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19. Parents/Guardians will be called and asked to collect their daughter immediately.

We strongly advise all Parents & Guardians, Students over the age of 16, teachers and staff members to download and use the [Government COVID Tracking App](#)

An enhanced cleaning regimen has been introduced to reduce the risk of introduction of COVID-19 to our school. Students will be required to wipe down their desks before leaving a classroom. Materials will be provided for this in every classroom.

Students must sanitise their hands when entering and exiting the school building and upon entering each classroom. Sanitisation stations are in place in every classroom, at key locations around our school and at every entrance & exit.

Posters encouraging correct hand & respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette are in place in prominent places throughout the building so that students and staff know how to protect themselves & each other and how to recognise & report symptoms of COVID-19.

Our Code of Behaviour is being updated to include breaches related to our school-based COVID-19 Health & Safety regulations. Failure to adhere to COVID-19 Health & Safety regulations will be dealt with under our Code of Behaviour.

Please do not hesitate to contact our school office by email (secretary@mercybeaumont.com, principal@mercybeaumont.com) or Phone: (01)8371478 if you have any concerns or queries.

Many thanks for your patience, understanding and assistance with all of our new arrangements.