

Dear Parent/ Guardian/Student,

We hope you enjoyed the Christmas holidays and wish you all a happy, safe and peaceful New Year.

We would like to thank everyone for their support and cooperation over all the challenges of the past two years. We are proud of our students, parents and staff for the huge efforts they have made to protect everyone and keep the school open.

As we return to school tomorrow, COVID numbers per day are extremely high and continuing to rise. It is more important than ever that we follow all health and safety guidelines to do all we can to stop the spread of COVID in school:

1. Students who are unwell and in particular with any of the COVID symptoms should NOT attend school.

2. If your child exhibits any of the following:

- Fever
- Dry cough
- Fatigue
- Loss of taste or smell,
- Nasal congestion,
- Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes)
- Sore throat,
- Headache,
- Muscle or joint pain,
- Different types of skin rash,
- Nausea or vomiting,
- Diarrhea,
- Chills or dizziness
- Shortness of Breath
- High temperature.

DO NOT SEND THEM TO SCHOOL.

3. Students should only return to school when they have been 48 hours free of symptoms.

4. The following year's specific Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form should be completed by students returning to school tomorrow and when students are returning to school after any absence: Forms are located on rathdaracc.com on the Covid-19 link.

5. Please do not use a negative antigen test as a green light to send a student to school who still has symptoms.

6. Current HSE advice for secondary school students and adults is attached to this email. Future Advice will be made available on the school website and emailed to all parents through the VSware app.

To minimize time missed from school through students picking up COVID in school or being close contacts, the School COVID response plan will be strictly enforced.

Students must:

- 1. Wear a mask at all times in school except when sitting at their own desk at breaktime or when outside and socially distanced from others.*
- 2. Masks must be worn correctly.*
- 3. Bring their own mask to school. We encourage students to wear suitable masks FFP2 or similar.*
- 4. Follow Social distancing rules.*
- 5. Students must stay in their own room at their own desk at breaktime when in doors. At Lunchtime students must sit at least 2m apart and in their pods or go outside. This is to reduce the number of close contacts that students might have in school, thereby reducing the numbers who would have to miss school in event of having to restrict their movements.*
- 6. Regular hand sanitising and cleaning of desks.*

Students who do not follow these rules are a risk to everyone's health and safety and will be sent home.

Our goal at all times is to ensure the health and safety of all staff and students. We ask for your patience and understanding as the current crisis will inevitably mean there may be staff out of work due to following HSE guidelines for close contacts or for those who have COVID. We will do our best as always, to try and keep school life as close to normal as conditions will allow. Students may be following alternative lessons in light of teacher absences or following work the teacher has assigned on Google classroom.

We appreciate that this is a difficult and stressful time for all and would like to thank all of you for your support and diligence in ensuring the safety of all the school community.

If you have any particular concerns, please contact us. We look forward to welcoming all students back tomorrow.

Kind regards,

Emily Boyle