



The Teresian Secondary School

A great deal of work has been going on all through the summer and is continuing to ensure that the school is ready and as safe as is possible for students and staff as we begin the new school year. The Teresian School is committed to ensuring that the resumption of school is in adherence to the advice and protocols set out by the Department of Education and Skills and the public health authorities.

The Teresian School, due to its relatively small size, is in a unique position in terms of being able to meet the needs of our students and staff in an environment and routine which is not too dissimilar to what we were used to. The welfare and wellbeing of each of our students is our priority in conjunction with the provision of excellence in teaching and learning to ensure that each student flourishes and achieves her potential and beyond. Our staff and students displayed extraordinary commitment, adaptability and resilience since our school closed in March. These qualities will stand us in good stead as we head into the new school year.

While we look forward to a resumption of “normality” in terms of school life, it will be a new normal. However, with a positive attitude, adherence to the guidelines and the cooperation of all we will have a successful and enjoyable year.

The following is a summary of the steps which we have taken since last June to prepare for the reopening of the Teresian School.

Preparation for reopening:

- The Board of Management engaged a health and safety consultant to carry out a site visit and building survey in order to do a comprehensive risk assessment. He has advised the Board on practical steps to be taken by the school.
- A Covid-19 Response Plan has been drafted and is ready for approval by the Board of Management. This plan has been drafted in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocols from the Health and Safety Authority, the Health Services Executive and the Department of Health. It is also in line with the Department of Education and Skills Roadmap for the Full Return to School and Circular 46/2020.
- A Covid-19 Risk Assessment has been prepared to support the Covid-19 Response plan and a Health and Safety Statement has been prepared to take into account the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- The student toilets on the second floor have been completely refurbished.
- The water system on the third floor toilet block has been upgraded.
- The staff work area has been repurposed as an overflow staff room.
- New flooring has been laid in some classrooms to replace old and worn tiled flooring.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers & wipes have been installed throughout the school and in all classrooms.
- Desks and chairs have been spaced out to ensure 1 metre distance separating students and teachers' desks will be surrounded by Perspex as we do not have the recommended 2 metre distance between teacher and students due to classroom sizes.
- Face coverings will be mandatory for all staff and students
- Cleaning schedules will be increased and all common touch points will be cleaned multiple times per day.
- Robust procedures are in place to respond to a suspected case of Covid-19.
- We have displayed HSE guidelines and Covid-19 Safety Signage across the school (classrooms, toilet blocks, common areas) to educate students on how to 'Stop the Spread' of Covid-19.
- We have installed markings on the floor and school grounds at various locations to remind everyone about keeping their distance from others.

Staff and Student Training:

All staff are being trained in the safe management of the school and will be fully briefed prior to their return to the school building as well as receiving specific induction on their first day back to the school. Students will also receive training on their return to school explaining to them the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and protecting health and safety. These messages will be reiterated on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Access to School:

For anyone who has had symptoms, has tested positive or has been in contact with anyone who has symptoms or tested positive, or has travelled from outside of Ireland other than from a country on the “Green List” there will be no access to school for a 14 day period in advance of their start back date. Students and staff will complete a self-declaration form three days prior to their return to the school. This will be issued in due course.

School Code of Dress:

Students will be expected to wear their code of dress as per the Code of Dress policy. On days when a student has PE or training, she may wear her PE kit to school on those days as changing facilities will not be available. For those students who are waiting to purchase the new PE kit (particularly new students) they can wear plain dark leggings or tracksuit bottoms, an aertex polo top and their school jumper or school hoodie during the day. Any logos should be very discreet or preferably not there at all.

Use of Technology:

We are very pleased with the response of parents/guardians to the purchase of the Lenovo ThinkPad for their daughter(s). We feel that this will greatly facilitate the students this year for a number of reasons. Firstly, no lockers will be available for students as they have been removed to maximise space in the classrooms and corridors. Students are encouraged to leave their text books at home and where available use their e-books in school.

Secondly, it is vital that each of our students is ready and equipped for what will likely be a disrupted year in terms of school attendance. Should there be a lockdown in the coming months we will move immediately to teaching and learning via Teams and OneNote. Likewise, if a student or teacher is absent due to having symptoms of Covid-19 they will continue with their school engagement via Teams.

Thirdly, in terms of health, safety and hygiene, student work will be submitted for correction and feedback given digitally via Teams. Teachers will not be taking up copies, sheets or folders from students. Sharing of devices and other equipment in school is discouraged.

This investment, however, isn't for the short term. While the pandemic has prompted us to move more quickly than envisaged to the adoption of 1:1 devices this path was inevitable in terms of changes to curriculum and the emphasis on the development of key skills. By using technology to achieve a blended learning approach we can incorporate the best practices of traditional teaching and learning with the vast array of multi-media tools, educational platforms and accessibility features provided by technology. The Teresian School Digital Strategy has now been updated as we move towards a pedagogy aligned with teaching 21st century skills and a clear commitment to a more student-centred personalised approach to learning. There is a strategic and focused continuous professional development plan in place for the upskilling of teachers in the use of technology. For this school year and in subsequent years the use of Microsoft Office Teams and the Office Suite will be an integral tool for each teacher and student. For any parent/guardian who did not see the information webinar on the introduction of 1:1 devices, it is available at this link and all the details are there: <https://bit.ly/3dLs5Fj>

School Reopening Schedule for Students:

Parents/Guardians are requested to **drop their daughters at the school gate until further notice and not drive into the school grounds**. Please note that students should arrive on the school premises no more than 10 minutes ahead of start times.

Thursday 27th August :	TY Cairde Training - Super Generation Workshop (all TY students) Time to be confirmed
Friday 28th August:	1st Year CAT 4 Exams (9:00-12:00) 3rd , TY and 6th Year Induction (9:00-12:00)
Monday 31st August:	1st Year Sports and Games with TY Cairde Mentors (9:30-11:30) (All First Years and TYs) 2nd and 5th Year Induction (9:00-12:00) Study Skills 6th Year (9:00-11:00) Study Skills 3rd Year (12:00-2:00)
Tuesday 1st September:	Introduction to school sports – all 1st Years Classes as per timetable all other years
Wednesday 2nd September:	Classes for all years as per timetable

Supervised Study:

We envisage that supervised study will be available, however, at reduced numbers and duration. The details of this will be made available in the coming weeks. Sixth, fifth and third year students will be prioritised.

Canteen:

We are currently in discussion with The School Food Company regarding the reopening of the canteen. As soon as we have details we will let you know.

School Communication App:

As you are aware FlexiBuzz has ceased operations during July. We have been working in conjunction with an app developer to replace it with an alternative. As soon as it is ready to launch we will send you notification by text.

After School Sports:

We are planning for the resumption of Hockey and Basketball training from 13th September. This is subject to guidance from the managerial authorities and will be in accordance with the guidelines set out by the sporting bodies. Details will be made available in due course.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our parents and students for their support and encouragement. The many letters and expressions of thanks received and offers of help with the reopening of the school are deeply appreciated. I am confident that our Teresian Girls will embrace the return to school with enthusiasm, positivity and rise to any challenges that will inevitably arise. We can be confident that our teachers and students will work together, be it in school or from home (we need to be ready for this eventuality) and, as in the last term, our students will not be disadvantaged in terms of their learning outcomes. We

were in the very fortunate position then that we were able to move without delay to online teaching and learning. Many other schools were not as fortunate in this regard. We are now in a stronger position than before.

We ask that parents/guardians show patience and forbearance during the year when issues around teacher illness etc occur. In relation to this it is important to note that the DES, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the State Examinations Commission have agreed a reduction in curricula and other concessions due to the disruption to teaching and learning due to the lockdown, school closures and the uncertainty ahead. Every effort will be made to ensure that minimum disruption occurs and substitute teachers recruited. Course work will be completed, deadlines will be met and any remediation measures necessary will be taken to ensure that our students will be more than ready for state examinations and all years meet their learning goals.

The Government has published many documents which should answer most queries you may have regarding the reopening of schools. Please take the time to read through them, they should help ease any anxiety you may have around the return to school.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/>

I wish all our students a safe and happy return to school. We look forward to the new school year and all the opportunities it will bring. Ní neart go cur le chéile (Unity is strength).

Yours faithfully,

Deirdre Hickey

Principal

