

# Re-opening East Glendalough School

## Information for Parents and Students

August 2020



East Glendalough School has planned significant changes in response to the Covid- 19 pandemic.

This presentation details these changes in the context of the document: *Reopening Our Schools – The Roadmap for the Full Return to School*, published by the Department of Education and Skills, 27 July 2020

How this presentation works:

**Public Health Advice** and statements from *Reopening Our Schools* are in black. Changes that will be made in **East Glendalough School for this year** are marked in blue.



### How this presentation works:

This document is not intended to cover *all* changes announced by the Department of Education and Skills, or made by East Glendalough School.

It is a summary for parents and students of the most pertinent alterations in advance of the opening of the School. Inevitably, EGS will alter and review day-to-day operating arrangements

- In line with changing public health advice and DES recommendations
- In the light of our experience and the practicalities of the systems put in place at the start of the year



### What this presentation covers:

- Key Public Health Advice
- The East Glendalough School Covid Response Plan outlining:
  - Minimizing the risk of introduction of Covid-19
  - Minimizing the possibility of spread including
    - Cleaning arrangements
    - Physical distancing arrangements including timetable and other changes
    - Students at high or very high risk
    - Use of PPE
    - Arrangements should a suspect Covid case arise
    - Wellbeing
    - The School's Tús Maith Programme: Our aims for Pastoral Care and ICT training
    - Curriculum alterations in the light of the Covid situation
    - PE, Games, Sport and extra-curricular activities
    - Learning in the case of a further full closure



## Public Health Advice

### Key Points from *Reopening Our Schools*

The measures set out in the Public Health Advice are “*aimed at risk minimization of COVID-19, for young people, teachers, other staff, their families and the wider community, recognizing the importance of education for health and well-being ...*”

Control of COVID-19 in schools is predicated on two general recommendations:

1. Minimizing the risk of **introduction** of COVID-19 into the school community; and
2. Managing the risk of **spread** if introduced through:
  - Regular hand hygiene;
  - Maintaining physical distancing;
  - Application of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette; and
  - Environmental hygiene



## Public Health Advice

### Key Points from *Reopening Our Schools* (cont.)

There are a number of broad themes:

A Balanced Approach “One of the key challenges for schools during this pandemic is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for pupils/students and where teachers feel able to engage with pupils in a way that supports their learning”

Apply Common-Sense “An atmosphere of fear and an overwhelming preoccupation with infection and hygiene can be harmful to teachers and pupils and to the quality of the educational experience without materially reducing the risk of infection beyond what can be achieved with a common-sense approach”

Create Awareness “A heightened awareness by staff, parents and children (where age appropriate) is required so that they know how to protect themselves and each other and how to recognise and report symptoms of COVID-19 infection”



## Public Health Advice

### Key Points from Reopening Our Schools (cont.)

There are a number of broad themes:

Do everything practical to avoid introduction of COVID-19 into the school "The most critical part of managing the risks of COVID-19 related to schools is doing everything practical to avoid introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If the infection is not introduced it cannot spread. The risk of introduction is related to how common the infection is in the community served by the school at a given time. If the infection is uncommon in the community then the likelihood of introduction is much lower"

Stay at home if unwell "No person (child, teacher or parent) should attend an educational setting if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19"

Keep doing the key measures to keep us all safe

"Social (Physical) distancing, hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette should be observed by all (children, teachers, parents and visitors)"



## Covid Response Plan

The East Glendalough School Covid Response Plan is aimed at preventing the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

### Reducing the chance of introduction

..it is critical that people stay at home if unwell. Nobody should go to school if they are unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

There will be restricted access to East Glendalough School for persons other than staff and students, and for essential purposes. A detailed log of all visitors will be maintained. **Parents are asked to refrain from coming to the School other than by appointment.**

The Office will not accept items from parents/guardians for delivery to students (lunch, sports equipment etc). These may be dropped **in a container in the porch/lobby area** of the main Office area at student/parent's own risk.

Sport fixtures: Visiting teams from other schools will not be permitted on campus until we are informed by the authorities that this is safe.



## Covid Response Plan

### Reducing the chance of spread

East Glendalough School will:

- Support and promote good hand hygiene at all times and encourage respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette as well as working with the School on **the use of face coverings indoors**
- Engage in an enhanced cleaning regime
- Work to ensure physical distancing on the campus and in the classroom – **students will need to work with us on this as we educate our community about the standards we will expect**



## Covid Response Plan

### Reducing the chance of spread

Teachers AND students will receive training to reduce the possible spread of Covid-19.

Good **hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene** and **cough etiquette** will become part of the culture of the School.

Hygiene will be emphasized in classes, in meetings of Year groups, and to individual students as required.

However: Reopening our schools states that:

*“An atmosphere of fear and an overwhelming preoccupation with infection and hygiene can be harmful to teachers and pupils and to the quality of the educational experience...”*



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### An enhanced cleaning regime

The School has been cleaned over the summer. A daily regime of cleaning, in accordance with the Roadmap, is being implemented. "High touch" areas such as door handles and rails will be cleaned during the day.

The use of shared equipment including electronic equipment will be restricted. Practical subjects will conduct practical elements and experiments in accordance with advice as this emerges and in compliance with subject requirements.

Students may not share stationery or equipment.

Students will be asked to wipe their own desk in each lesson. Wipes will be provided in the classroom.

Hand sanitizer units have been installed at every classroom door and every entrance and throughout the School. Students may also wish to bring personal hand sanitizer.



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### Physical Distancing

*Reopening Our Schools* notes

**Public Health Advice:** "...the principle of distancing can be usefully applied in the school setting, allowing for some flexibility when needed whilst noting that it must be applied in a practical way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue."

Physical Distancing can be achieved in two ways:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction between students themselves and between students and staff

However, *Reopening Our Schools* notes

"staff will not always be able to maintain physical distance from their students and it is not appropriate that they would be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the student or the learning and health and safety of other students."



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### Physical Distancing

East Glendalough School will ensure physical distancing on the campus and in the classroom. There will be:

Assemblies for single year groups only. Our distinctive EGS ethos and community spirit is important to us. However, it is intended to have Assembly for **single year** groups only.

A Split Lunch: East Glendalough School is looking to implement a split lunch system.

The Canteen will not operate when School restarts. A packed lunch in a clean lunchbox will be necessary, along with a **named** waterbottle as appropriate.

The areas of the School in which yeargroups are based will be provide space to allow eating lunch. Students will, however, be encouraged to eat outside.

Toilets – it will be necessary to restrict the number of students using toilets at any one time.



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### Physical Distancing *(continued....)*

#### Re-organized classes

Instead of the traditional E/G split in each group of 60, students will initially have Form Classes of 20 students.

Movement around School: in line with guidance, yeargroups will be allocated base areas in the School and, by-and-large, teachers will come to students.

One way systems in place: An extensive one-way system has been marked out, inside buildings and around the campus.

Re-organized Classrooms: Classrooms throughout the School have been altered to maximize the space between students in accordance with recommendations in *Reopening Our Schools*. (Please see next slide.) Where necessary, class groups will be moved to larger rooms. All standard academic classrooms have single desks for students.

No Lockers: lockers will not be used. Students will be required to carry all belongings with them in a single backpack/bag.



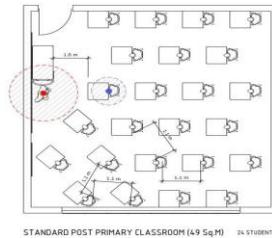
## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### Physical Distancing

A template for a standard academic room has been suggested in *Reopening Our Schools*, illustrated below.

In a **standard room** in East Glendalough School there will be 22-3 desks. Class groups will be altered to meet this maximum number. Many subjects will need to use mixed ability teaching as a result. ; in many cases class groups will be smaller.

Where such splitting of classes is not practical or possible, a class will be timetabled to be in a larger room. Where this is not possible – and there will be times when it is not – classes will be split and given the opportunity to watch the class live as appropriate or to engage in the class using PPE as a last resort.



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### Students at risk

The School acknowledges the difficulty returning to school may pose for vulnerable students.

Parents/Guardians of students who have a serious underlying condition should in the first instance contact their GP for guidance on the matter of physically attending classes.

We would ask that parents of students in this category then contact the School to discuss the matter. The School is awaiting guidance on how these students might be provided for.



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### Use of Masks and PPE

**Public Health Advice** now states that students and staff in post primary settings should wear cloth face coverings where 2m distancing is not possible. Given the tight confines of our space in EGS, this will be the case for our students throughout the School day.

- *It is not a staff member's responsibility to enforce mask use by pupils.*
- *EGS requests that all students have a clean face covering with them in School each day.*
- *Wearing a mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic*



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### Use of Masks and PPE

East Glendalough School staff **will wear a face covering when in class**, as a matter of course when indoors, and when it is not possible to be socially distant or separate from others.

#### **Uniform**

Students are expected to have a full clean uniform (see information on PE/Games for exceptions). While it is not required that the uniform be cleaned every day, it is requested (as it always is!) that uniforms are regularly cleaned and that students are well presented. If public health guidance changes on this, we will inform you in good time.



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

Should there be a suspected case of Covid-19 in East Glendalough School:

The person (student/staff member) will be brought to a newly designated isolation room under the guidance of the appropriate staff member.

In the case of students, **parents/guardians will be contacted** and arrangements will be made to **leave the campus** immediately; as per HSE guidelines, a GP should be consulted for follow up.

Appropriate **cleaning of possible contaminated areas** will take place.

Where there is a suspected case of Covid-19 within the School, staff and pupil confidentiality will be maintained. **The School will follow HSE instructions.**

### **HSE Public Health will:**

inform any staff/parents or students who come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process; contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made and advise on the appropriate action, on a case-by-case basis, that should be taken vis-à-vis the operation of the school.



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### **Physical Distancing**

The consequence of these changes, particularly the no locker rule, are that:

- Students should have one backpack/bag only with them during the day.
- All the items required for the day should be in this bag.
- It should contain: a folder, pad and pencil case for taking notes etc, snacks, lunch and drink required for the day, **a clean mask for each day** for use as required, a personal **named** water bottle. Their books for class (a general maximum of 6 subjects with little movement between classes)
- Students will be required to keep this bag with them at all times during the day; remember, there will be no access to lockers.
- If a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Year student needs to bring a phone to School, it should be kept off and in their bag during the day.



## Covid Response Plan      Reducing the chance of spread

### School transport

Families will be aware that students using bus transport will be required to wear a mask on buses to and from School.

Guidance on bus transport will be provided by Bus Eireann and/or the Department of Education and Skills



## Covid Response Plan

### Wellbeing

Students and parents have been naturally worried about the risk to their physical health and that of their loved ones and have been challenged by the public health measures that were put in place in Ireland to control the spread of the virus, such as staying at home and school closures.

Our aim in East Glendalough School is to build resilience, to be factual and supportive with students, to keep them active and connected and to ensure a positive learning environment at all times.

This will be a time of change, with new rules and routines to learn, in order to keep everyone safe. Some students may feel worried about returning to school, and that's normal. Most will however, re-engage with little difficulty after an initial settling in period.



## Covid Response Plan

### Wellbeing

...the wellbeing of school communities at this time is guided by five essential principles:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

East Glendalough School will utilize Year Group Assemblies, regular class contact, the SPHE programme and Form Teacher time to instill a culture grounded in these five principles.

A return to school, involving structured, age-specific guidance at the start of the year has been planned.



## Covid Response Plan

### Learning and School Programmes

Learning priorities for East Glendalough School will include:

- Supporting all students in settling back to school, ensuring that new students to the School and students with particular needs are well supported.
- Our Pastoral Care Team (and Student Support Team) will identify and support those in most need of support.
- Planning the curriculum in a manner that acknowledges that students have had different experiences while learning from home: EGS' teachers will be naturally be particularly cognisant of this.
- Building on the experience of using digital technology to support contingency arrangements in the event that students need to continue their learning in a remote learning environment for a period during the 2020/21 school year.



## Covid Response Plan

### The Curriculum

#### The DES acknowledges that:

Curriculum considerations for 2020/21 must ... take account of the variable learning experiences of students during the period of school closure, the likely disengagement by students from particular aspects and areas of learning,... and the practical contexts in which teaching and learning will be taking place in the new school year.

Subject-specific guidance is expected on this in the next number of days. It is expected that while curricula will **not** be shortened, **more choice** will be offered in examinations to make completing a paper possible for students in all schools.

In addition, explicit provision must be made for contingency curriculum planning for a situation in which there might be an unexpected period of school closure. EGS has been working on a blended learning solution should there be a need.



## Covid Response Plan

### The Curriculum

**At Junior Cycle level:** The number of CBAs to be completed by junior cycle students entering third year in the school year 2020/21 has been reduced and the dates for the completion of CBA1 for that group of students has been extended into the new school year.

#### For Exam Years 3 and 6:

**There will be:** "*adjustments to the certificate examinations in 2021 ... the adjustments that will be put in place will play to student strengths by leaving intact the familiar overall structure of the examinations, while incorporating additional choice. In some cases, the adjustment measures will provide more time for tuition by, for example, reducing preparatory work for practical examinations. In addition, briefs for coursework will be issued early in the school term to provide certainty for students.*"

As assessment practices at the end of junior cycle and senior cycle are centrally determined, it is possible to adjust the arrangements to take account of the general loss of learning opportunity for those students who are due to sit leaving certificate and junior cycle examinations in 2021.

Changes to the national assessment arrangements have been made with due regard for the principles of equity, fairness and integrity as they relate to students, subjects and year-to-year comparisons.



## Covid Response Plan

### The Curriculum ( ..for Exam Years 3 and 6 continued)

The flexibilities will be proportionate to the loss of learning that students have experienced and will be offered within the following parameters:

There will be the same focus on assessment of skills and the same overall standards as in other years. There will be an assessment of a breadth of knowledge content that is proportionate to the reasonably expected impact of Covid-19 on the capacity of students and teachers to complete the full curriculum over the course of the cycle.

There will be changes to some coursework components for some subjects; for example, adjustments to the volume of preparatory work to be undertaken, the number of tasks and possible synergies across the components involved. There will be changes to some written examination papers, such as adjustments regarding the choice available to students.

Overall, the changes, whether reduction in course content, or through course study time, can be viewed as reflecting and recognising a loss of learning opportunities in the 2019/20 school year in a fair manner, with some contingency for future learning loss that may occur during the 2020/21 school year also built in.



## Covid Response Plan

### The Curriculum ( ..for Years 3 and 6 continued)

For the Leaving Cert 2021 it is repeated that:

In all subjects, the changes "... will involve some combination of one or more of the following adjustments in 2021:

- Students will be provided with greater choice in written examinations; this will be supported through the provision of additional questions and/or adjustments to mandatory sections on written examination papers
- The dates on which coursework briefs are issued will be brought forward to allow for additional preparation time for students and teacher
- In some subjects, adjustments to the requirements for practical examinations will be made; these adjustments will reflect the need to manage access to equipment to complete the preparatory aspects."



## Covid Response Plan

### The Curriculum

#### In Transition Year:

The School is working with DES guidelines and suggestions around the Transition Year programme, aiming to provide as full and varied an experience for our students as will be possible.



## Covid Response Plan

### The Curriculum

#### PE, Games and After School Sport

PE and Games are currently planned to take place as normal for relevant year groups. However, activities may be restricted to reflect the requirement for distancing and correct hygiene. East Glendalough School believes that activity for students is vital for physical and mental health and for connectedness within our community.

**Changing rooms will not be used until future notice:** Students who have PE, Games or After School Sport on a particular day will wear their **full** PE gear (including School Hoodie where at all possible) to School for the day. This decision will be reviewed during the term.

**Lockers will not be available.**



## Covid Response Plan

### The Extra-Curricular Programme

Sport The School will be adhering to best practice and advice in the running of after- school sports. It is hoped to provide some normal sporting activity after school, in a safe manner. However, it may be some time into September before this is up and running. The difficulties of mixing yeargroups on sports teams in a small school need to be explored.

Changing rooms will not be available.

Choir Current advice is that large choirs may be particularly difficult in the current situation.

Drama It is planned to run the Drama club this year. It is hoped that a performance will be possible, though which method any performance might take (live or recorded) will be decided at a later date.

Evening Study As with other areas of after-school activity, it may not be possible to run Evening Study this year. In any event, it will not run in September. However, this decision will be reviewed in the first weeks of the new School year to examine its feasibility.



## Covid Response Plan

### Learning and School Programmes:

#### Learning in the case of full school closure

Teachers, students and parents will need to be prepared for a local or national school closure. Should this happen:

- Google Classroom will be the main platform used to conduct learning (ie receiving instructions, submitting assignments and attending live classes)
- ICT training at the start of the year is intended to support learning in general but, critically, to support students in the case of full closure
- Students will follow the normal timetable. Live classes using *G-Suite* (or Zoom where appropriate) will be conducted as appropriate and as possible. In the course of a week, not every class can be live; some may be recorded.
- The designated EGS email address only should be used by students



## **New Schedule for start of year 2020-2021**

Monday 31 August – 1<sup>st</sup> Year (and new students in higher years) – 2.00pm

Tuesday 1 September – 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year for the morning (08.55-1.20)

Wednesday 2 September – 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Year (08.55-1.20)

Thursday 3 September – 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and TY (08.55 – 2.00)

Friday 4 September – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, TY, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year (08.55-4.00)



## **Changing advice and developing information**

The advice and guidance issued to Schools this summer has been just that: advice and guidance. The School continues to do its best to manoeuvre through the myriad issues presented by the return to School in such unprecedented circumstances. As advice changes and the situation in our schools and society locally and nationally continues to progress, we will review our procedures and continue to work to provide the safest environment we can for our community.

Thank you for your patience and support as we do this.

This too will pass!

