



# Lwetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
an Longfoirt agus na hIarmhí  
Longford and Westmeath  
Education and Training Board



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Further to our correspondence from last week (Letter to parents August 2020 - <http://www.ballymahonvs.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Letter-to-parents-August-2020.pdf>), the following key elements have been clarified. I hope that this addresses some of your key concerns and questions. As guidance is continually being updated, any changes will be notified to you as soon as possible.

### **Lunchtimes and Break times**

These have been staggered to allow for an increased capacity on the school grounds during these times. Break time will be 15 minutes and Lunchtime 30 minutes. Students must remain on the school premises for the duration of the school day unless students provide a letter to state that they are returning to their own home for the Lunch break. A number of outdoor marquees have been installed to allow for social distancing during lunchtimes. More information on canteen facilities will be provided in the coming days.

### **Classrooms**

All students have been assigned a base classroom where they will have an assigned seat. For the majority of their subjects, they will remain in that room. For specialist subjects, students will need to move to a specialist room where they will be seated with students from their own base class. The same will also occur in subjects where students must decide on Higher or Ordinary level. All base classrooms have had excess furniture removed to allow for social distancing as per the guidelines.

### **Entering and exiting the school**

Students arriving by bus should immediately go to the school. All other students should not arrive at the school prior to 8.45am. Upon arrival, students must go directly to their base classroom and sit at their own assigned seat. Students must seek permission to attend the toilets at all times during the school day including upon arrival. We have three access points and students will access the school at their own designated point. This will be identified on their induction day. On their respective induction day, all students are to proceed to the PE hall. All students must exit by their assigned exit points also.

### **PPE**

Students **must** wear a **plain face mask** when on school premises. Access will not be granted to the school where a student does not have a face mask. Masks should be used as per guidelines and washed after use. Anti-bacterial wipes will be provided in all classrooms to allow students to wipe their own desks and chairs at the start of each lesson. In practical classrooms, equipment must be cleaned after each use. Students should provide their own tissues.

### **Hand Sanitisers**

Sanitising dispensers have been installed on the entry to each classroom and toilet as well as the three entry points to the school. Students must sanitise on arrival to school, during the change of classroom, after each break, after eating and after using the toilets. Correct use of sanitisers will be demonstrated as part of the students training which will be completed online.



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## **One-hour class periods**

To reduce movement in the school, all classes will now be one hour in duration. The school day will now conclude at 3.45 each day. This is as a result of a shorter lunchtime to allow for adequate supervision.

## **Uniform**

The school uniform must be worn at all times with the exception of PE day where students will wear in their PE gear and wear it for that day only. Regular washing of the uniform is essential. The school uniform includes the **school jacket**. As windows will be open in classrooms to allow for recommended air circulation, classrooms will be significantly colder especially as we move into the winter months. Students may choose to wear appropriate clothing underneath their uniform.

## **Lockers**

As social distancing will be of utmost importance, the use of lockers will not be permitted this year. Some students still have items in their lockers from last year and an opportunity will be provided to remove those. As we have moved from 9 periods per day to 6 periods per day, school bags will be significantly lighter and students are advised to only bring in the books that they require for each particular day. This means that students should plan their day on the previous night. We also suggest the use of soft copies rather than hardback copies to reduce the weight of school bags.

## **Homework and Classwork**

Teachers will not be collecting homework copies/worksheets for the foreseeable future. We have a range of online platforms where work can be submitted to teachers. This will be discussed in each class with each respective teacher.

## **One-way system**

There will be a strict one-way system for all members of the school community. Floor markings are in place to remind students of this.

## **Toilets**

Numbers attending the toilet at any one time will be restricted. Each student must seek permission from their teacher and then sign the sign off sheet in the classroom that they have left. Each year group will be assigned their own specific toilet area and must only use that toilet area.

## **Isolation Procedures**

If a member of the school community becomes unwell, they will be moved to the isolation room (the school library). Parents will be contacted immediately and the students must be collected as soon as possible.

## **School visitors**

Access to the school is by appointment only and by the permission of the principal. Please contact the school should you wish to make an appointment. Students will not be called out of class during the school day to facilitate appointments, etc. A note must be provided, which can be shown to the secretary/principal/deputy principal and they may leave during the break times in this event. All pick-ups and drop-offs must occur outside the school gate.



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## **Contact details**

It is very important that parents update the school immediately if they have changed their address or contact number.

## **Reopening Dates and times**

- Monday August 31<sup>st</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> year Covid-19 training. (Separate correspondence will be sent relating to this)
- Tuesday September 1<sup>st</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Year induction 9am – 12.30pm
- Wednesday September 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> year students 9am – 11am, 1<sup>st</sup> Years 9 – 3.45pm
- Thursday September 3<sup>rd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> year students 9am – 11am, 1<sup>st</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> years 9 – 3.45pm
- Friday September 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> year students 9am – 11am, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> years 9 – 1.15pm
- Monday September 7<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Year students in all day
- Tuesday September 8<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> year students 9 – 11am, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> years 9 – 3.45pm
- Wednesday September 9<sup>th</sup> – TY students 9 – 11am, all others 9 – 3.45pm

It is vitally important we all do our very best to minimise the risks to all members of our school community. We ask you to keep your child at home if they display any of the symptoms as outlined by the HSE. This will also be included in the training video that will be provided to all students.

Finally, Ballymahon Vocational School hopes that you and your family stay safe and well during these strange and unprecedented times.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Higgins  
Principal