

10<sup>th</sup> of August 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

I hope that you and your families are keeping well. We look forward to welcoming our pupils back to school at the end of August. Our school calendar was circulated via the Aladdin App in June and is available on our school website; <http://www.gvet.ie/mt-content/uploads/2020/06/20-21-school-calendar-.pdf> . **The return to school for pupils currently remains at 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2020.**

### **School Books**

As previously advised, information on purchasing school books is available on our school website; <http://www.gvet.ie/booklists2020/>

### **Junior Infants 2020**

Parents of New Junior Infants will receive information specific to them via Aladdin. We are excited to be welcoming a new group of Junior Infants into our school. Unfortunately, we could not host our usual in person information evening in June and instead a Zoom meeting was held – slides from this are available on our school website; <http://www.gvet.ie/junior-infant-info/>. Reminder: Junior Infants attend for a “short day” during the first three weeks of school. We were also unable to host a “Meet your teacher” session for new Junior Infant pupils. This will be facilitated online prior to the return to school- keep an eye on your Aladdin Messages for more information.

### **Building Update**

The work to create additional classrooms in the “new building” has been completed. These rooms are being prepared for pupils return. I have visited the site during July to check on the progress of these works. The prefab building remains on schedule to be ready for pupils return on 31<sup>st</sup> of August and in time to allow for the necessary COVID 19 safety precautions to be put in place. New IT equipment has been ordered through the procurement process and dates for installation in the prefab classrooms have been agreed with our supplier and SISK (on site contractors). The grass area to the rear of the “old building” has been upgraded and will be available for pupils to use at yard and PE times. A new pathway has also been created for pupils to access the basketball cages. I will visit site again this week to check on the progress of works and meet with the contractors. We are awaiting a written communication update from SISK and the Department of Education – once this is received it will be circulated to parents.

### **Class Allocation**

You will be advised of your child’s class teacher soon. Interviews took place for fixed term contracts in July and these have all now been filled. Children will be welcomed back to school by lots of familiar faces! We have one permanent post to fill which was created by the resignation of one teacher who has moved to the west of the country- this has been advertised in line with Department rules and regulations.

### **COVID 19 and return to school**

The Department of Education has advised that it has; “a *communication plan for school re-opening which ensures that schools, school communities and all stakeholders will have the relevant information to support the re-opening and continued operation of skills.*” The DoES has also informed schools that a public information campaign regarding return to school which contains information

for parents and pupils is currently being developed. This information is available on <https://www.gov.ie>

We are currently working through the Department of Education guidance ***“COVID – 19 response plan for safe re-opening of primary schools.”*** Each school is currently completing a Covid-19 Response Plan, as outlined by the Department of Education, which will be shared with parents prior to the return to school. Each school will use the COVID 19 Response Plan template to develop a plan tailored to their school community. We have been, and continue to, work through the documentation, procedures and guidelines set out by the DoES to facilitate a full return to school. As you will appreciate, this is a huge task for all schools around the country. Once the Board of Management has completed this work further communication will issue to the school community.

The Department of Education **Roadmap for the Full Return to School** sets out the following;

Public Health Advice

COVID 19 Response Plans

Return to Work Safely Protocol

Measures to be implemented in Schools to minimize the risk of introduction of infection in our schools and managing the risk of spread of infection

Additional Supports available to schools to implement COVID 19 Response Plans

Arrangements to Get Children Safely to our Schools

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Students and Staff

Guidance on Learning and School Programmes in 2020/21

How schools can support staff and students who cannot attend school for health reasons related to COVID 19 and in the event of a school closure in the future

Communication Arrangements

A summary on what schools will be like when they reopen.

Mise le meas,

Andrea