



*Holy Faith Secondary School,  
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9<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope you are all keeping well during these challenging times with guidelines and restrictions changing and directing our interactions with family, friends and colleagues.

The students have been very good humoured and adaptable in what are far from ideal conditions for teaching and learning. While all schools have common concerns, our own school has additional challenges with regard to space, classroom size and broadband connectivity. Please be assured that I am aware of all the challenges facing students, staff and parents and with Ms Molloy, recently discussed the issues with an Inspector from the Department of Education and Skills, as well as communicating directly with the Department and the management body for voluntary secondary school.

The school will be renting a room in the Parish centre to give additional classroom space. As part of our contingency planning, we will be running trial home learning for 3<sup>rd</sup> (Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> Oct) and 5<sup>th</sup> years (Friday 16<sup>th</sup> Oct) next week, similar to the recent trial for 6<sup>th</sup> years. Students and parents in these year groups will be asked to read and agree to e-learning protocols that will be issued. As informed by the DES inspector, live streaming may not be done at present to students at home but we did emphasise that such protocols need to be issued by the Department as a matter of urgency.

As mentioned in previous correspondence with parents and students, we have relaxed our policy on phones/devices for all students; students may bring them to school at their own risk. The rules are still that they can only be used in class with the express permission and under supervision of the teacher. Otherwise they should be powered off and in their school bag / pocket. No student should be using apps other than those used for educational purposes e.g. Teams, OneNote etc. Most social media apps and sites are blocked through the school WIFI but may be accessed when students use their own data. Students should not access any of these apps (TicTok, Instagram etc) during the day or at break/lunchtime. We have spoken to all students about this and, as staff are unable to walk amongst students to monitor this, we are operating a high trust model. 1st years, in particular, are a concern in this regard and I, together with the Deputy Principal and their year Head spoke with them all to highlight our concerns. Sanctions, up to and including suspension, will be imposed where breaches occur. We would encourage parents to check their daughter's screen time, if this feature is available on her device, to also monitor this.

To ensure the continued health and safety of the school community, it is vital that students come to school with protective mask at all times, have sanitizing wipes to clean their desks before use and to maintain social distancing as far as practicable.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October, we will remember Margaret Aylward, the founder of the Holy Faith Sisters. As a woman who faced many struggles in her time, we might draw particular inspiration from her in these days.

Yours sincerely,

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**Deirdre Gogarty,  
Principal**