



Dear Students Parents and Guardians

We are delighted, after much speculation in the media, to receive confirmation on a return to school date for Form 6 on March 1, Form 5 on March 15, and finally the remainder of the year groups on April 14th.

As mentioned in last week's email the overarching priority now is to get our students and staff safely back to school, and to avoid an outbreak when they return. From August to December, we have shown that our mitigation strategies were robust and we were able to avoid any spread of the virus in school. However, since the reason for this current lockdown is a more virulent variant of the virus, with case numbers remaining high in the community, our guard cannot drop and we cannot allow complacency to set in.

Therefore, we ask for the same level of adherence to public health guidelines at home as at school, and all public health advice and Level 5 restrictions must be followed from now until the return to school.

Many of our international boarders returned to school at the end of December, spent their quarantine in single rooms, and received PCR tests in order to be allowed to return to sharing the campus with the other students. Any international students who returned to school from a host family having stayed in Ireland over Christmas, had to do the same. Those students have remained in a low risk environment for the past ten weeks, and we want to maintain this environment for all students now.

Although day students will be travelling to and from the school each day, our boarders form part of a household in KH, and are sharing bedrooms, kitchenettes, and common spaces, in the evening and at weekends. Day students' locker and social areas will be separate from boarders, and they will eat together at lunch. In the corridor and classrooms, students will remain one metre apart with full compliance expected around mask wearing, sanitisation of chairs and desks, and hand hygiene, as before. New 3-ply reusable masks will be made available for students with the option of placing a disposable filter inside. Students are reminded not to come to school if they are feeling any way unwell, until a Covid-19 diagnosis is ruled out by testing.

When boarders return on Sunday March 14th, there will be 2 school weeks and 1 weekend in the calendar up to the Easter Break.

To protect all of our boarding students we are asking the following:

1. **That all boarders must present with a negative PCR test on arrival to school on Sunday evening, March 14th, that was taken within 72 hours of return (the cost of which will be rebated to you). Once a student takes the test, they must isolate and avoid public places until they return to school. We can provide details of test centres we have used, so please email Cormac UaBruadair with any PCR queries.**
2. That 7-day boarders do not return home until Easter.
3. That 5-day boarders change to 7-day boarding and remain until Easter (there will be no additional charge for staying on the one weekend)
 - a. If for pastoral or family reasons a student cannot stay as a 7-day boarder, then students will have to take an antigen test at school on return the



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Form 5 Boarder families return to school information 25-2-21 following. The student must room with another 5-day boarder, that is also returning home, and both sets of parents must accept the risk of students mixing households after a weekend at home.

- b. There is a higher false positive rate experienced with Antigen testing, so if a student tests positive they will have to be referred to a GP for PCR testing immediately.

The Board of Governors will review the situation in relation to boarding fees for the period students were not in residence, now that there is more clarity on return dates for students.

We realise that a return to boarding and sharing a different household will create anxiety for some students, and indeed parents. Please get in contact with your houseperson, or a member of our [wellbeing team](#), if you would to talk it through with them, in more detail.

We have been taking advice from our School Medical Officers, and it was confirmed, that PCR testing for all boarders was an appropriate mitigation for the initial return to school. Our School Medical Team, including our School Counsellor, Clair Breen, will be on campus to support the students' return.

Return Time Sunday March 14th

Students can return between 7 & 9pm on Sunday evening. As per Level 5 restrictions, parents are asked to remain in their cars at all times. The house staff will assist with luggage, if needed.

Overseas Students

Any overseas student that has not yet returned to school should contact me immediately to discuss travel and quarantine arrangements, and plan for a return to Ireland as soon as possible.

As we will be monitoring these protocols closely with the Form 6 students, over the next two weeks, some of the above information may be subject to change, to provide for the safest environment possible for all our students and staff.

Yours,
Cormac UaBruadair
Deputy Head Pastoral – Head of Boarding