



# THORNHILL COLLEGE

4<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers and students

As we approach the beginning of our first full week and the much anticipated return to the classroom for our whole school community on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September I wanted to give you an update about the practicalities of how our school community will operate in the days and weeks ahead.

From 24<sup>th</sup> August we have embarked on a phased and staged induction for all year groups. I trust that your daughter has had a very positive return to school experience as she has been given the opportunity to reconnect with her peers and the new routines within Protective Bubbles and Learning Zones that have implemented to ensure the health & safety of all. We have been thrilled to have the girls back all looking so well and to hear the noise and the familiar buzz around our corridors. We felt that it was essential to provide the necessary reassurance that every measure has been implemented to reduce anxiety and build resilience for all and ensure a safe and measured return for our whole school community, where every girl is considered a priority and relationships with all stakeholders are key.

Our planning has been informed by the recent psychological evidence of Professor Barry Carpenter's 'Recovery Curriculum- Reconnection, Re-igniting and Resilience' which has advised a need to meet the students where they are at and give them time to reflect and reacclimatise to their educational setting. My hope is that your daughter feels reassured with the procedures and measures that have been implemented and feels energised and enthused about her return to school. Indeed, the feedback received from many of our girls has been extremely positive and this has been most welcome.

Having previously shared our Re-entry and Curriculum Delivery plans on our school app and website, today I would like to share with you our Care & Well-being section for your perusal. This plan will detail the pastoral support available within the College to support the psychological, social and emotional wellbeing of your daughter and hopefully will address and allay any concerns that you may have as your daughter returns to school on a full-time basis.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the practical arrangements pertaining to the health & safety arrangements put in place and the importance of adhering to these. This includes reminding pupils about only accessing the building through their designated entrances, the importance of hand sanitising and hand washing, the requirement for all pupils to wear a face covering on school transport to and from school, on corridors and other communal areas of the College, unless they are exempt from wearing face coverings for medical reasons.

Canteen facilities will be available at satellite dining stations within each Protective Bubble/Learning Zone from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September however we would encourage the bringing of packed lunches where possible. Pupils will still be given an opportunity to top up their accounts and this will happen at the beginning of each week in their respective zones.

Parents this is a gentle reminder that pupils cannot access entrance to the building until 8.45 am daily and as there will be no extra-curricular activities for the foreseeable future we ask that they are collected promptly at the end of the school day. We are staggering our finishing times to enable a safely controlled exit and to help alleviate some of the congestion problems that can occur – KS3 pupils will finish at 3.20pm, KS4 pupils at 3.30pm and KS5 our normal 3.40 pm. Of course we will be mindful of the weather conditions and any child availing of school transport can remain on the school premises until finishing time. I must also stress that parents should not visit the school unless a prior appointment has been arranged as we are trying to limit the number of visitors to the school.

It would be greatly appreciated if all completed data collection forms could be returned to your daughter's form teacher as soon as possible. You will then receive an invite to download the Sims App as this will be our main method of communication for the year ahead and will replace our former Edtap service. This new app will include the facility for on-line payment for canteen meals etc.

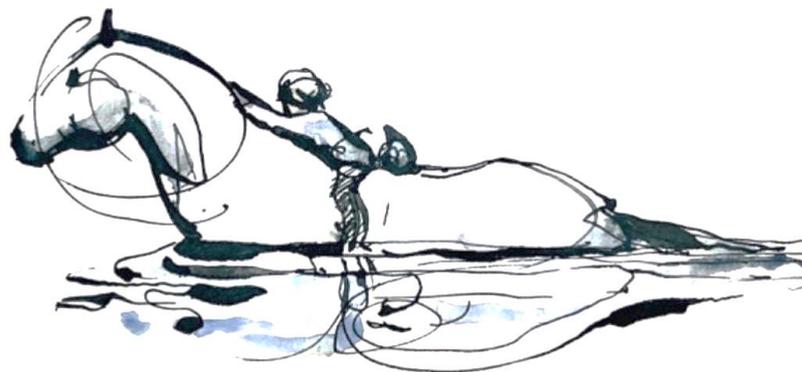
Parents I realise that you have received a number of communications over the last few weeks outlining our plans and I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate the myriad of complexities that we have had to consider. We have responded as quickly as we possibly could in light of the ever changing guidance provided by the Minister of Education. Communication with our parents is key and I would like to inform you that you will be receiving regular updates from our respective Heads of School keeping you abreast of important developments about school life in the coming weeks and months ahead. Rest assured we will continue to focus on academic excellence with high expectations from all for all.

I ask you to keep us all in your thoughts and prayers for the forthcoming days and weeks ahead.

Warmest regards

Sharon Mallett

*"Everyone is a bit scared,"  
said the horse*



*"But we are less scared  
together."*

142 Culmore Road, Derry, BT48 8JF

Tel: 028 7135 5800 Fax: 028 7135 3311 email: [info@thornhill.derry.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@thornhill.derry.ni.sch.uk) [www.thornhillcollege.org.uk](http://www.thornhillcollege.org.uk)

Principal: Ms S Mallett Bsc, MSc, MSc, PGDFHE, PQH