

St. Malachy's College

36 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AE



August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you have had a good summer break. As we are now preparing to open the College to all pupils I am writing to inform you about our plans to do so. Firstly, I want to thank you and your son for visiting us for the meeting held in June with members of staff and when you received information to help prepare for the beginning of Year 8 life in St Malachy's College. Further to this, following a review of recent instructions from the Department of Education we are now able to invite **all Year 8 pupils (without parents) to attend both of our opening induction days on Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 August, from 9.00am until 12.00pm.** This will mean that all Year 8 pupils will now benefit from a two-day planned induction experience, with the Year 8 Pastoral team offering each boy an extended period of support to allow him to smoothly transition into life with us here at the College.

Please note that if your son has recently been on a holiday to a destination which requires quarantine on return, he should not attend until the end of the quarantine period, please advise us if this is the case.

Please be advised that there will be strictly no access to the College site for parents/carers on these induction mornings. Additionally, due to health and safety no parent/carer may drive into the College grounds to drop off or pick up their son. Where there is a medical issue, we may make an arrangement with you regarding this and you should contact the Head of Year, Mr Kevin Niblock to discuss.

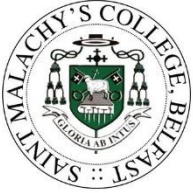
The boys should attend in full uniform, with regulation hairstyles and bring a snack with them for their break on the induction mornings. Boys should enter via the Main College Avenue gates and proceed to the College Hall where they will be directed to their Form Room by a member of College staff, assisted by Senior College Prefects, to be met by their Class Tutor. Once the session has ended your son is free to go home on each of the induction days at 12:00pm. **Year 8 pupils are then not required to be in school again until 9.00am Tuesday 1 September,** when academic classes shall commence for Year 8 pupils.

During your visit to the College in June, you were informed that this term will most likely begin with a blended form of learning and teaching. In line with recent instruction from the Department of Education I am happy to be able to inform you that **from Tuesday 1 September our Year 8 boys will be attending the College every school day from 9.00am until 2.45pm.** The final timetable adjustment to be made for your son is that he will hopefully soon be able to attend for a full day and have class until 3.25pm rather than 2.45pm. The arrangement to end the Year 8 school day at 2:45pm will remain in place for the month of September. In the meantime, if the situation changes we will then contact you about this.

Your son's registration class will act as a "bubble" and will receive all lessons in the one allocated classroom. Social-distancing will be rehearsed and practised. There will also be one-way systems in place for movement around the College. Each year group will be allocated their own toilet area and times. Your son will stay in his classroom for break. He will be allocated a designated venue for lunch and also

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be allowed some recreation time outside of the classroom but remaining within the year group bubble. The College may request pupils to wear **plain face masks** during some lessons to protect vulnerable pupils and staff. When academic classes commence from Tuesday 1 September Year 8 pupils should therefore bring a packed lunch to school unless they qualify to avail of free school meals.

With regard to the practicalities of the new way of school life, attached is a document **outlining KS3 return to school important information**. Please read this in conjunction with the ***Education Restart - Letter to Parents and Carers from the Minister of Education***. It must be stressed that these are working documents, as you are aware the situation remains fluid. We must all play our part in ensuring that our boys, staff and families are as safe and healthy as possible. **To this end I ask that you spend time reading through the enclosed leaflet and do so with your son.**

It is important that we adhere to our agreed procedures and the boys must understand if they do not do this then it will be viewed as a serious breach in conduct and be dealt with in accordance with College policies. This may also lead to exclusion from class or school. I am confident that our new Year 8 Malachians will act in the correct manner, and at a time when it is extremely important to do so. If you have any further queries or concerns please contact, Mr K Niblock, Head of Year 8 or myself, Mr C Heaney, Head of Key Stage 3 and then as we move into the academic year your son's Class Tutor will be an invaluable first contact point. If your child is in a clinically extremely vulnerable category or a clinically vulnerable category, please contact Mr D Goodall, dgoodall826@c2ken.net, to organise a risk assessment. Parents of boys who hold a statement of special needs should contact Mrs Evans, Specialist Teacher for KS3, if they have concerns or queries.

We at the College deeply value the close partnership that exists between staff and our parents/carers. Regrettably we cannot offer our usual parent information sessions this year which would have allowed us to assemble together in the College Hall and reflect on a shared vision for the year ahead for our Year 8 boys. Please continue to consult our various social media platforms and ensure that you have signed up for ParentApp so that you keep up to date with events and developments and can receive relevant documents pertaining to the Year 8 Curriculum provision.

Thank you for your support and understanding during this time of ongoing change and ask that you continue to work closely with us at the College to ensure that together we can support the boys to be happy at school and allow them to realise their potential in the months and years ahead.

Gloria ab Intus!

Mr C Heaney
Head of Key Stage 3