

EDUCATION AUTHORITY SOUTH EASTERN REGION
FORT HILL INTEGRATED COLLEGE



Principal:
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2nd July, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Our induction programme this year has had to be significantly altered due to safety guidance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. We normally would have welcomed our new Year 8 cohort to an induction day in June, but all in-college induction has been postponed until August. This will include activities to introduce staff, College Prefects and other Year 8 students, to gain a knowledge of the college site, to gain confidence in the midst of the transfer from primary and providing a baseline assessment to inform our target-setting and early support and intervention.

The College Senior Leadership are currently working on a plan for the new academic year, which follows much of what we had in place through last year. I am confident that the relationships which provide the foundation of all we do, will provide a framework of support within which we all as a learning community can grow and achieve. Further information about the plans for the new academic year will be forwarded once detailed guidance is provided by the Department of Education and the Education Authority, but this is not due until August.

Fort Hill Integrated College will be open for Teaching Staff from Thursday 19th August for 4 training days, focused on implementing the new practices. No students will be in college on these days unless meetings by appointment have been agreed, or collecting exam results by pre-arranged appointment.

Start of Term Inductions

- Induction 1: The first Year 8 Induction sessions will be either **Wednesday 25th August or Thursday 26th August, from 9am until 1:30pm.** *(Please see the table at the end of this letter to see which day each student is required to attend, based on the Primary School they attended).* This induction morning is designed to provide your child with an opportunity to settle in to their new school environment. They will meet a number of key staff, develop new friendships with other Year 8 students through ice breaker activities, begin to learn about the integrated ethos of our college and participate in a tour of the campus to see the wide range of classrooms and resources they will be using in their time with us. To assist us in placing your child into classes which best suit their academic needs, they will also sit computerised baseline tests within this session. All students will be required to bring in their own headphones or earphones. Students should attend either Wednesday or Thursday morning, and remain at home the other day. Students are to wear their full school uniform, and may wish to bring a school bag to hold their headphones or earphones, along with a bottle of water and snack if wished, as the canteen does not begin service until Wednesday 1st September, 2021.

- Induction 2: On **Tuesday 31st August** all Year 8 students are required in school **from 9:00am until 12:30pm**. Year 12 students will also be attending this morning, with staggered arrivals and departures on this day. Year 8 students will find out who their Form Teacher will be and the other students making up their Form Class, with activities planned to further develop their confidence. Again, they should bring a school bag with a bottle of water and snack if required.

Year 8 will begin their timetabled lessons on Wednesday 1st September, 2021, arriving at the Registration gathering area by 8:55am.

Please be aware, owing to COVID-19 assessments, parents will not be able to access the school buildings without appointment. On the initial induction days, Year 8 students can be dropped off along the school avenue, but further details in Appendix 2 will outline arrangements from Wednesday 1st September to prioritise the safety of the Integrated Primary students.

The pastoral staff who are already working to support our Year 8 students have posted a “First Days” booklet on the school website, within the RESTART 2021-2022 section, (<https://www.forthillcollege.co.uk/restart-202122>). As I along with staff and governors consider and implement the guidance expected in August from the Department of Education, updates will also be posted in this section on the school website.

Once the school year starts, information will be distributed through ParentMail. Until the start date rolls over, information will be sent via support240@forthill.lisburn.ni.sch.uk or you can contact the School office by phone (028 9266 3670) or email info@forthill.lisburn.ni.sch.uk

Information will also be accessible through Fort Hill’s social media accounts: FaceBook (@FortHillIntegratedCollege), Instagram (@forthillintegratedcollege) and Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/forthillcollege>).

We would normally have a special Year 8 Parents’ Welcome in early September, and **Tuesday 14th September** is currently scheduled. This normally allows us to engage further as parents and educators, and to see how what we describe within our “First Days” booklet is put into practice. Further details will follow.

I understand many will have anxieties about the restart and transfer to post-primary education in these extraordinary times, but a significant amount of planning has already been undertaken, to provide an environment that meets the guidelines to maximise learning in the current context. There is also a balancing act to be performed between what we are implementing now in our current context, while preparing for the context to change, either for the better or worse.

I look forward to meeting my “Year 8 History-makers” on Wednesday 25th or Thursday 26th August, and welcoming them into our learning community.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Millar

Principal

APPENDIX 1: Baseline Assessment Groups and Dates

GROUP X – WEDNESDAY 25th AUGUST	GROUP Y – THURSDAY 26th AUGUST
Ballymacash Primary School	Cranmore Integrated PS
Brownlee Primary School	Finaghy Primary School
Carryduff Primary School	Fort Hill Integrated Primary School
Downshire PS Hillsborough	Harmony Hill Primary School
Dunmurry Primary School	Oakwood Integrated Primary
Gaelscoil na Mona (Belfast)	St Aloysius Primary School
Holy Trinity Primary	Seymour Hill Primary School
Killowen Primary	Taughmonagh Primary School
Knockmore Primary	Tonagh Primary School
Largymore Primary	
Lisburn Central Primary	
Maralin Village Primary	<u>Any other Primary School not listed.</u>
Meadow Bridge Primary	
Millennium Integrated Primary	
Moira Primary	
Old Warren Primary	
Pond Park Primary	
Riverdale Primary	
Rowandale Integrated Primary	
St Colman's Primary Lambeg	
St John the Baptist Primary	
St Joseph's Primary Lisburn	

APPENDIX 2: COVID-19 Plans (as of 2nd July 2021)

Break and Lunch

It is essential to note that Year 8 students will NOT be allowed off our college site at break or lunch. The school canteen is not available at break, so students should bring their own break if required. Pre-ordered packed lunches will be available from the canteen, along with hot food. The packed lunches must be pre-ordered through an online system which all will be notified of before the return to school. As no students will be allowed to leave the college site during break or lunch, students who do not want a packed lunch provided by the canteen must bring their own.

With the staggered break and split lunch, and to prevent crowding along corridors, students will be encouraged to use seated areas around the exterior school campus. Wet weather contingencies will be explained to students in August, but it is expected that students will be outside on the majority of occasions and should therefore bring a coat.

School Uniform

All Fort Hill Integrated College students will be expected to wear school uniform as normal. Information will follow regarding PE kit once the updated guidance from DENI is received and considered.

Managing the School Day

- A one-way system will be in place in most areas around the college, with adaptations to the previous system. Signposts will help direct travel, and this will be a part of students' induction.
- Hand-hygiene will be important and students will be required to use hand sanitiser or hand-washing facilities at regular points during the day, but access to toilets will be limited due to space. Sanitiser will be available at all entrance points. While facilities will be available, students will also be encouraged to have their own small container of hand sanitiser and to use it regularly.
- Students will have to bring their own equipment, and will not be able to borrow items from either staff or other students. They should therefore have pencil cases, appropriate school equipment and stationery, and a school bag to hold this and other items they will need.
- Communal water fountains will not be accessible and therefore students should bring their own bottle/container with water in it.
- While I value the relationship we build between home and our college, parents and other external visitors will not be allowed within college buildings without appointment, unless absolutely necessary. If you wish to speak to a member of school staff, please phone to arrange an appointment, as walk-in meetings will not be available to begin.
- There will be increased cleaning staff activity throughout the school day. There will also be cleaning products in classrooms for staff and students to use where there is staff or student transition.
- Any student displaying COVID-19 symptoms should NOT be sent to school under any circumstance. Any student developing symptoms during the school day will be treated according to PHA guidance and placed in a location to minimise the risk to any other member of our college community. Contact will be made with home to arrange immediate collection.
- As indicated earlier, following social distancing rules, hand hygiene and behaviours in line with Public Health guidance will be required of all staff and students. This will be made clear to all and to protect our extended college community, a full range of sanctions will be available and imposed where required. Policies reflecting and clarifying these will be posted on the college website.

Travel

We are still awaiting any details regarding travel from Education Authority or Translink. If you decide to provide your own transport, from Wednesday 1st September, please do NOT come on the campus, as we wish to prioritise safety for both our students and those of the Integrated Primary School. The positioning of hand sanitisers will mean the area just outside the college entrance doors will not be accessible to any other than college staff with accessibility requirements. College students can be dropped off in Lisburn, near Wallace Park, or along the Low Road, and should follow all road safety advice on the final part of the journey to and through the integrated campus and our buildings.