An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

27th July 2020

Dear Parents/ Guardians

Since I was appointed Minister for Education on 27 June, my first priority has been the full re-opening of schools. Today the Government approved a Roadmap for Reopening of Schools, and a funding package of €376 million to support this. I am confident that the supports and additional resources we have provided will enable our schools to open safely.

An enormous amount of work has been done to prepare detailed guidance based on the interim public health advice for schools, which we received in late June.

The plan has been developed by consulting with those who know best how schools run: representatives of students, parents, principals, teachers, SNAs, support staff and school management bodies, and. Their expertise has been crucial in putting this together and I am very grateful to all involved for their hard work over many weeks.

I know that school communities have a big job ahead of them to prepare for the return to school. We have put in place some practical supports and a significant financial package to help. This includes funding to make physical changes that schools may need, funding to employ an aide to move furniture, help re-organise rooms and get things ready before schools reopen, and funding for substitution and replacement of teachers. We will also be providing funding for hand sanitiser and for personal protective equipment, where appropriate.

Every school building and circumstance is different, and I've asked each school to communicate directly with parents and students about the changes that you can expect when term begins.

Before the return to school, the Department will provide schools with some communications materials that are age-appropriate, to help you to support your child's return to school. They will also be available on Gov.ie/backtoschool. I hope you will find these useful.

I know that your children and you have experienced severe disruption as a result of Covid-19. Pupils, parents, teachers and schools have made enormous efforts to keep teaching and learning. But school is a special place, and some of the best parts of learning are being in a classroom with other children, and everyone has missed out on that.

I know some children and young people may be nervous about returning, and we will all be working to support them to settle in, to feel safe and to be happy in their school work, when schools return.

I hope you and your families have a lovely summer and get to enjoy some time together.
Throughout this pandemic, we've all been in this together. This will be a time of change, and there will be new routines for the students and for us all to learn. We will

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learn this together, because we all have a role to play in keeping the whole school community safe.

With every good wish



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