



Holy Family Secondary School  
*To Be Family and To Build Family*

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear students of HFSS

We wrote to you all earlier with specific year groups' email. All of us are living through an unprecedented time as we work to keep our community safe and healthy in the face of the coronavirus. The HFSS school community is joining millions in towns, counties, and nations across the world in confronting decisions that we've never had to face—and maybe never could have imagined having to. Last Thursday, we announced, we were moving to a remote learning model, with a projected reopening of HFSS for the week of March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We know that this was abrupt, and has had the potential to cause huge disruption in your lives.

However, we want to acknowledge that for our students, and for our exam year students in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year in particular, this unexpected and very sudden school closure may have been causing you to worry and to feel heightened levels of stress about your state exams and completing your subject curriculums. This is completely understandable as social media and news outlets tend to broadcast sensationalist news first. In times of worry, always seek out the positive to rebalance the negative news. Let us reassure you, we will do everything that we can at HFSS to support you and have you ready, confident, assured and prepared for your exams and for meeting the curriculum requirements. This is a national issue and there will be a national solution. We will plan to catch up however we need to. Do not let feelings of worry damage your academic confidence and your wellbeing. You have the resilience and common sense to deal with this, one day at a time. This will pass and we will be back in school together.

We want to be clear that in the meantime, this is not a school closure, rather a transition, and a change to remote learning. Of course, this change has been forced on you all but it is also an opportunity now to embrace a slower pace for deeper learning. We will not lower our expectations for our students. We know that you are eager to keep learning and we will match your curiosity and passion with work-from-home activities and assignments. We know this is a difficult time, and we are working hard to make sure HFSS continues to support your remote learning. We also know the calibre, kindness and hard work ethic of our students and we know that you will do your very best.

We expect all of you to follow your normal school timetable, as much as is possible for you, when that is possible for you. This is not a holiday time – you are empowered now to take control of this change. You will need flexibility with this at times because you may need to tend to your own family needs too in this national time of emergency. We fully respect and support this.

Now it the time to come together to do what's not only best, but what is the right thing to do, as active citizens, for the health and safety of our great country and our beloved families. Of course, we miss our normal school routine but you are empowered now to take control and be pro-active. **You need to social distance.** Be patient and tolerant and lean in now to support our national family. We need you to lead by example to others. When President Michael D. Higgins visited us at HFSS in September 2019, he asked us to **'Be the arrow, not the target'**. This means that young people need to be proactive and determined and embrace new ideas and not just wait to be passive and reactive. Now is the time to lean into that opportunity.

Keep in touch with your teachers on TEAMS and OFFICE 365. There are a number of free, online websites with excellent notes for students, <https://www.scoilnet.ie/> your teachers will update you with relevant sites.

We are asking all students to respect e-communication boundaries with your teachers. Although the on-line temptation may be there to email queries after school hours, please understand that HFSS staff are also managing this transition and supporting their families. Keep school queries for teachers to within normal school hours.

We would ask you all to drink lots of water and stay hydrated. Being indoors for long periods can cause headaches. Keep moving and get in some physical exercise to balance out your day. Our school's Wellbeing Co-ordinator, Mrs Carey is also going to email you some more advice and sites to support your wellbeing at this time.

Below is some practical advice for the remote school weeks ahead.

Above all, remember you are a HFSS student and that our ethos 'To Be Family and To Build Family' is representative of that. Your patience with others, your support for your own family and your sensible focus on achievable remote learning will make a difference. We have every confidence in you.

Soli Deo Gloria, God bless you all.

Kindest regards,

S. Allen (Principal) K. Aherne (Deputy Principal) K. Kissane (Deputy Principal)

Practical advice;

**Check your email and TEAMS daily (Monday- Friday)**

**Follow the school timetable for all activities and subjects and plan your time wisely.**

Try to sit down and work through any projects as consistently as possible. Those who haven't had much experience in self-directed learning may feel the urge to do the work at the last minute. Here's a helpful tip: don't. It's better to do the work early and often, as there will likely be times you need additional feedback.

**Get Organised**

Whether your study area is your bedroom, a study or a specific room, it's important to **keep it tidy and organised.**

**Take your work seriously**

One of the worst pitfalls a new remote student will fall into is not giving their work the amount of attention it needs. A classroom limits inevitable distractions. If you've got a PowerPoint to get through in place of a lecture, don't scroll through it while your TV is on. It's also smart to put your phone away —all it takes is one distracting text or tweet to derail a half-hour of hard work.

**Keep things in perspective**

We know that this is easy to say, however, don't stress out so much about the changes and challenges that bubble up. The situation is changing every day, and everyone is learning as they go. HFSS is working out the new routine too, and as long as is required, stay sensible and lean in and manage your time wisely, you'll be able to adapt to whatever comes your way. We have every confidence in you as learners. We can only control our response to any given set of circumstances.

# SOCIAL DISTANCING:

## What does it mean?

Social distancing is the practice of reducing close contact between people to slow the spread of infections or diseases. Social distancing measures include limiting large groups of people coming together, closing buildings and cancelling events.



AVOID	Use Caution	Safe to DO
Group Gatherings Sleep Overs Playdates Concerts Theatre Outings Athletic Events Crowded Retail Stores Malls Workouts in Gyms Visitors in your House Non-essential workers in your house Mass Transit Systems	Visit a local Restaurant Visit Grocery Store Get Take Out Pick up Medications Play Tennis in a Park Visiting the Library Church Services Traveling	Take a Walk Go for a Hike Yard Work Play in your Yard Clean out a Closet Read a Good Book Listen to Music Cook a Meal Family Game Night Go for a Drive Group Video Chats Stream a favorite show Check on a Friend Check on Elderly Neighbor