



The Director  
BG /CT-20200828-140406/732

Uccle, 28th August 2020

Dear Parents, Students and Colleagues,

Welcome back to the 2020/2021 school year. We sincerely hope that you have managed to have a break from the everyday and that you and your extended families have had a healthy summer period.

We have been busy working on our re-entry together with the Office of the Secretary General and the other European schools across Europe. We are looking forward to having our students and staff back in school and to resuming our normal business of teaching and learning in situ, with some obvious safety procedures put in place.

We have closely followed developments in Belgium and intend to align ourselves very closely with the recommendations that the authorities have made for all schools across the country. We have included with this mail excerpts from the 2 circulars 7691 and 7686 - Definition of a strategy for the start of the September 2020/2021 school year in the context of Covid-19 -one relating to Nursery Primary Education and the other for Secondary education. These documents clearly lay out the planning for the schools in Belgium depending on the level of the alert based on 4 possible colour codes. We are currently under the alert level "Yellow"

We would like to summarise the implications of the yellow alert level here;

- All students should return to school full time 5 days a week.
- All students from the secondary S1 up to S7 will be required to wear a mask for the duration of the full day in school. The only exceptions will be during recreation time when they are socially distant(1.5 meters apart) and when they are eating in the canteen. It is not obligatory for the primary students to wear masks, however, if the parents wish their child to wear a mask, the school does not object. Students' masks need to be provided by the parents. The school will provide masks for the staff. Staff will wear masks at all times in the classes and when they move around the campus. In primary, teachers can remove their mask when they are sitting at their desk and observing social distance. Nursery teachers don't have to wear a mask in their classrooms while observing the social distance with their assistants.
- While there is no forced restriction of third parties at school we will continue to limit severely the access to the school campus. We would intend to continue to carry out meetings with parents and others held on line using Teams by distance unless it is not possible. Our primary focus is a resumption of teaching and learning in situ.
- We have suspended all class trips until January 2021 at the earliest and we issue a warning that it is possible that there will be no school trips of any kind for the duration of this school year.
- The canteen will open for all students with certain restrictions in place. Students from the Nursery and Primary will eat together with their class and social distancing will not be

required. Students of the secondary will eat in groups of no more than 24 and they will only be permitted to remove their mask while they are sitting and eating. The APEEE service, who organises and runs the canteen service in Uccle is trying to work on a contact tracing methodology as an added safety measure within the school. They will communicate further details with you directly.

- The outside recreation areas and playgrounds will be open as normal. Secondary students will be permitted to remove the mask when they are outside and can be socially distant from each other.
- The rules for hand hygiene will remain exactly as they have since the beginning of this pandemic. Students will be advised to wash their hands regularly with soap and water and where this is not accessible or available students can use the alcohol rub which is widely available across the two campuses. We would also recommend that parents to provide a small bottle of alcohol wash for students personal use so that they always have access from the time they leave home in the morning until they return home each evening.
- We will advise staff that all classrooms and public spaces of the school should be well ventilated and windows should remain open or be open regularly throughout the day. This will imply that students may need to have warmer clothing with them during the days where the weather is cooler.
- In terms of social distancing, we will put one way systems in place as much as possible to facilitate the great distancing but as a general rule social distancing is not required for nursery and primary students and as the secondary students will always have masks on this is also not a requirement.
- School transport-operated by the APEEE services - will operate as normal with all secondary students or over 12 being required to wear a mask at all times. The APEEE services will communicate further details with you directly.
- Swimming classes will be resumed in the coming weeks and further details will follow shortly.

The personal responsibility of each member of our school community will be paramount in the continued fight to keep our staff and our families safe throughout this pandemic. We rely on each individual to follow the various rules and guidelines laid out by the school and by the Belgian authorities. To assist you in this area we include some further details and links:

- <https://www.info-coronavirus.be> This site provides, in 4 languages all the details and the relevant links that a person living in Belgium will need to follow.
- <https://diplomatie.belgium.be/en> This site provides, in 4 languages all the details relevant for travelling to and from Belgium. Please check this site at any time when you will travel outside of Belgium and when you will return to ensure that you have followed the national requirements. It is each person's (parents and member of staff) responsibility to assess whether they should quarantine or not. Where in doubt, seek medical advice. If a child is attending school and a member of staff is attending work, then the school management assumes that this person does not need to follow obligatory quarantine. If children are in quarantine, their teachers will keep some contact with them as they would do if they were away due to illness (eg send homework, assign work, etc). Since the Belgian authorities have announced that education in situ is compulsory, this also applies to staff working in our school. All are expected to report for work, except if they are in quarantine or in a vulnerable status. If a pupil falls under the vulnerable category, then a medical certificate needs to be presented to the Deputy Director of the cycle. The Deputy Director and colleagues will assess each case and will do their very best to support the child as much as possible so that they do not fall behind. This support can take the form of sending work, assigning homework and contact with the student. We would like to be clear that the phase we are entering is not a hybrid phase (a group in school and a group at home with teaching and learning online and in situ). The phase we are entering is in situ education.
- <http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=28296&navi=4677> This is the site of the Wallonia Brussels Federation relating to Education. We have attached a translation of excerpts of some sections of this site.

The OIB and the APEEE service-Cesame- will resume their services of Garderie and Periscolaire activities and they will communicate further directly with you in the coming days.

The school will continue with the increased procedures for cleaning that were instituted last year. The school is undergoing an intensive clean before re-entry. Each classroom will be cleaned each evening. Toilets will be cleaned several times a day. Surfaces will be wiped on a daily basis. Use of the appropriate disinfectant will be in place. We would recommend that all parents would provide wipes to their children which would allow them to wipe the surface of their desk before they start each class. This is of course only an advisory and is not a requirement either within the school or under the national guidelines.

We intend to share with you next week the various procedures that we will undertake in case of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID 19 for any students or staff of the school. This advice is currently being updated by the Belgian authorities and once we have the full details and procedures we will share them with you.

The above information, guidelines and regulations are effective as we send this mail but of course the situation may change at any time. In case any of the information changes and impacts on the way we organise the school we will communicate with you. We know that there is worry and fear across our school community but we also know that our students need to return to as normal as way of life as possible and so while we may face further challenges in to the future we do so, secure in the knowledge that we are working as part of a school community who is working together in partnership. We know that with your support and flexibility we will chart a course through these different times and that we will be able to achieve for the whole community a successful school year.

Kind regards



Brian GOGGINS  
Director