



Press release – 30.07.2020

The Psychological Society of Ireland provides guidance for returning to school post COVID-19 restrictions

- Aimed at schools (primary & post-primary) that are preparing to welcome children back to school post-restrictions
- Guidance provides advice to school staff around supporting students in the transition back to school

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) has developed a guidance document to aid school staff, both primary and post-primary, as schools prepare to reopen for the 2020/21 school year. ***The Relaunch: Back to School After COVID-19 Restrictions*** provides advice, developed by PSI Educational Psychologists, to school staff supporting students in the transition back to school. Teachers and other members of school staff will be key players in helping children to relaunch their school lives as members of the school community and as active learners in this 'new' school environment, which will see some very real differences and new challenges.

In getting ready for the relaunch, teachers and staff will need to be sure that they are feeling confident themselves, even if a little anxious. In returning to the school environment it will be important that teachers and other school staff feel confident, prepared, and are supported by the relevant agencies. The familiarity of school buildings, yards, and classrooms; familiar friends and classmates; and, familiar and trusted teachers and staff, will assist children with a return to school.

Advice provided by the PSI takes into consideration the preparation that school staff need to undertake prior to the beginning of the new school year. It is essential that staff wellbeing is prioritised at a strategic and systems level, and that measures be put in place to foster physical and mental wellbeing among staff members. These staff members are vital in re-establishing the school community which will foster wellbeing and resilience of students. Whilst creating a calm, supportive environment, it is also important to reflect on the pandemic and the restrictions. Due to schools being closed since March, there may be worry around the potential loss of learning. School staff and students, with parental support, will need to re-engage with the curriculum. It is likely that many students are looking forward to returning to school and will transition back with few problems. There will, however, be a large minority of students who will need additional support to help them manage the transition and readjust to life at school. The nature of the support will vary according

to their individual needs. Existing care and special education systems can be used to identify, monitor, and support these students on an ongoing basis.

Mark Smyth, PSI President, states: “A return to school in September is likely to be a significant source of anxiety for pupils, parents and educators. In the PSI we hope that this guidance document will support everyone concerned with finding a good enough way to manage the uncertainty that may be experienced. When we relaunch, we will do so together. It was this togetherness that got us through the worst of times during COVID-19 restrictions and will again as we transition back to education.”

ENDS.

For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Lisa Stafford

PSI Head of Communications

087 945 2801

Note to Editor

- Click [here](#) to view ***The Relaunch: Back to School After COVID-19 Restrictions***
- The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), with circa 3,100 members, is the learned and professional body for Psychology in the Republic of Ireland
- This guidance document has been prepared by the PSI Division of Educational Psychology in response to the COVID-19 pandemic