Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to provide you with updated guidance on our return to school protocols.

1. Face Masks

Following the change to the guidance issued by the Minister for Education, face coverings **must** be worn inside when moving between classes, in enclosed communal areas (including Tutor Group rooms, the queue for the Canteen and Deli Bar, and in the 6th Form Centre), and on school transport, including the bus to Games.

In all other areas of the school, including classrooms, it is strongly recommended that a face covering is worn.

Face coverings can be either a mask or a clear, Perspex visor (whichever is the most comfortable).

If a pupil is unable to wear a face covering, please could you contact their Head of Form to inform them of this. This information will be noted and they will be issued with card which they can show to staff if challenged.

Please strongly encourage your child to wear a face covering. Staff will be doing the same.

1. Attached is a document that clarifies what will happen if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Methodist College community. By complying with the protocols put in place in school and following the guidance from Government and the Public Health Agency outside of school, we will be helping to reduce the risk of infection. Until such times as an effective vaccine is developed, it is inevitable that some members of our community will contract the virus. When that happens, we will follow our published procedures and act on advice from the Public Health Agency. The flow charts included in the document provide a step by step guide to the action that you should take if your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 or they are contacted by the Contacting Tracing Service.

The Contact Tracing Service is responsible for contacting individuals who may have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive. The following link takes you to a short video presentation that explains what close contact means and how the system works.

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19/contact-tracing>

 Methody will co-operate with and act on advice given by the Contact Tracing Service (PHA), including, if required, the dissemination of any information.Please note that the College will not disclose the identity of an individual who is suspected of having or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

The first few days of school have been very positive, in spite of yesterday’s weather. It is a pleasure to see the new Form 1 finally on campus and the seniors getting back into their normal study routines. We look forward to the rest of the pupils joining us on Tuesday.

 Kindest regards

Mr S Naismith

Principal