



## **ISA Press Release** **25<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

The Independent Schools' Association (ISA) has been closely following the situation of the transmission of Covid-19 within the Maltese community since the closure of Schools in March. The Independent Schools have been working tirelessly to create alternative scenarios for the schools' reopening. Up to the end of July, these plans were in place for this by all schools. However, the unexpected spike in Covid-19 cases in the first half of August has forced all Schools to re-evaluate those plans.

At this point in time, the ISA wishes to add its voice to the concerns of many professional bodies, parents and students about the critical importance of reducing the RT factor in the coming weeks. This is crucial if there is to be any real possibility for schools to reopen in Malta. It is the primary responsibility of Government to issue and monitor the necessary restrictions, and of all citizens and entities to fully comply.

Any school reopening can only occur if all entities and citizens of Malta realise that there is a strong correlation between decreasing the RT factor and its transmission rate within the community, and the safe reopening Schools. It is only by responding to the current spike in proactive, responsible and effective ways that we will be able to enjoy the return to physical schooling.

Furthermore, the ISA has been waiting for guidelines to be issued by the National Authorities so that the individual schools may then plan the year ahead. These have, to date, not been forthcoming. We are aware that they are in process. But we are now out of time and the guidelines need to be issued immediately so that all schools in Malta can prepare effectively for the next academic year.

These guidelines need to stipulate whether physical distancing is recommended in classrooms, transport considerations and the composure of bubbles/clusters, if this is to be the indicated way forward. Otherwise, schools may have to take their own decisions on how to proceed.

The ISA calls upon the National Authorities to issue the said guidelines immediately so that all the stakeholders (Heads of Schools, educators and parents) may take stock of the situation and plan accordingly.

The ISA would like to thank all the health and other frontline workers who are doing marvellous work at this difficult time. It also thanks all its educators, parents and students; we are confident

that this collaboration will continue in the coming months, irrespective of the scenario which the Independent Schools will be obliged to face.

The ISA remains committed to collaborate and to engage in fruitful dialogue and discussion with the Authorities in the best interest of all school children in Malta.

Sue Midolo

President – ISA

St. Catherine’s High School

Marica Portelli

Chiswick House School & St. Martin’s College

Annemarie Carabot

St. Michael School & St. Michael Foundation

Nollaig Mac An Bhaird

St. Edward’s College

Alfred Sant Fournier

St. Michael Foundation

Sandro Spiteri

San Anton School

Bernie Mizzi

Chiswick House School & St. Martin’s College

Stefania Bartolo

San Andrea School

Brian Gauci

St. Catherine’s High School

Tami Mac An Bhaird

Thi Lakin School