

The Covid Pandemic

Important Key Facts for Parents to Know:

The HSE tell us some important things we all need to know:

1. "You can spread the virus even if you do not have symptoms."
2. "The most common way you can get COVID-19 (coronavirus) is by coming into close contact with someone who has the virus."
3. "COVID-19 is mainly spread through close contact and droplets that come from your nose and mouth. For example, from someone who is talking loud, singing, shouting, coughing or sneezing."
4. "You can also get the virus from infected surfaces. For example, when someone who has the virus sneezes or coughs, droplets with the virus can fall onto surfaces around them."
5. "Airborne transmission... can happen over a longer distance... such as across a room.... To protect yourself, keep indoor spaces well ventilated (aired out) by opening windows and doors if possible."
6. "Wearing a face covering can protect you. But you should still do the important things needed to prevent the spread of the virus. These include: [social distancing](#), covering coughs and sneezes, [washing your hands properly](#), not touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean, and [follow the current Government restrictions](#)."

Above all taken from [the HSE website](#) at on 10th March 2021. If you have any questions at all, we recommend you look at [the HSE Covid-19 web hub](#) and the [gov.ie Covid-19 web hub](#).

COVID-19 can be a mild or severe illness. Severe illness is much more common in older people (especially older than 70) and in people vulnerable for other reasons. Severe illness is much less common in children and young adults in good health. (See below)

The most common symptoms of Covid 19 are:

- Cough - this can be any kind of cough, usually dry but not always
- Fever - high temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
- Shortness of Breath
- Breathing Difficulties
- Lack of sense of smell/taste

Uncommon Symptoms of Covid:

- Sore Throat
- Headache
- Diarrhoea

Symptomatic people appear to be most infectious for other people in the early days after symptoms begin. Infection can also spread from people in the day or two before they get symptoms, and it can spread from some people who get an infection but have no symptoms or such mild symptoms that they take little notice of them (asymptomatic spread). People are no longer infectious for other people 14 days after they have developed symptoms.

Best practice for Parents and Pupils:

To prevent the spread of the virus, **wash hands**:

- If you have been in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms
- If you have coughed or sneezed
- if you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing)
- If you have been on public transport,
- If you have been in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd)
- If you have handled animals or animal waste
- If you move from one room to another room or from inside to outside areas
- If you have physical contact with a child from another group other than their own group
- If your hands are dirty
- when you arrive and leave buildings including your home or anyone else's home.
- After using the toilet
- Before having a cigarette or vaping before and after eating
- Before and after preparing food
- Before and after eating your own food – breaks/lunches.
- After assisting a child to use the toilet or using the toilet themselves
- After contact with bodily fluids (runny nose, spit, vomit, blood, faeces)
- After cleaning tasks.

You must:

- **Wash your hands with soap and water (which is the best method to get rid of germs) and or use a hand sanitiser.**
- **Practice good respiratory hygiene:** that is, when coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- **Maintain social or physical distancing:** that is, leave at least 2 metres (6 feet) distance between yourself and other people where possible, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.

You must not:

- **Must not engage in handshaking or hugging.**
- **Must avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth** – if you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself

Keep your **hands** in good condition. Moisturise them often. Any basic product that is not perfumed or coloured is OK.

The staff will complete multiple lessons on correct hygiene, lining up, the importance of hand sanitising, staying within their pods/bubbles etc. with the children during the first weeks back in school.

Role of Parents:

It is important that parents have a clear understanding of the benefits and risk of attending school and that it is not possible to guarantee that infection can be prevented in any setting either in a childcare centre, school or in the home.

The following are protocols that are put in place to safeguard the health and safety of the school community. Parents are expected to abide by them and failure to do so may result in a parent being instructed to remove a child from the school building/yard, and or to leave the school premises themselves. If serious breaches of safety measures occur, the board and or the Garda may be informed or called if needed.

Under no circumstances is a parent to send or bring a child to school if -

- **if the child is exhibiting any symptoms of Covid 19-**
- **If the child has a temperature, is sneezing, coughing, who has been vomiting, has diarrhoea or has a headache or sore throat.**
- **If a child has been outside of the country in the 14 days prior to March 14th 2021, they are not to attend school but must isolate**
- **If the child has been in contact with any family member and or other person who has Covid.**
- **If a child is living with someone who is exhibiting or think they may have Covid**

If in doubt about your child's condition, it is best to keep them at home and monitor them for 48 hours. Contact the school to let them know. Contact your GP if your child is still unwell after 48 hours.

If your child is not exhibiting any symptoms and is in good form, then they are ok to send to school.

If your child is asthmatic or suffers from allergies, please ensure that the school is aware of this.

Arrival and departure procedures for children and parents:

- **Any parent who is in a high-risk category should not drop off or collect children in order to protect themselves. (This of course is at the discretion of the individual parent/carer/grandparent's discretion)**
- **Home times will be staggered for 3rd to 6th classes.**
- **Parents must wait outside the school in their cars or at the railings outside and maintain social distancing in the evening time when waiting to collect a child. It is**

important that parents do not congregate outside the school gates when dropping or collecting pupils.

- **Should a matter of urgency arise for parents, they must phone the office and make an appointment for access.**

Access will only be permitted once their temperature has been taken, they have used the hand sanitiser and are wearing a mask.

Once inside the school building, they must maintain the required social distance and follow the directions of the principal/staff member.

Parents/guardians accessing school grounds by appointment must wear a face mask.

- **At arrival and dismissal times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.**
- Markings on the ground will note where a class can line up. See attached map and layout.
- Collection times will be staggered to avoid groups of parents/children congregating together.
- **Classes have been assigned zones in the yard and corresponding doors.**

Important Note to parents

To facilitate all families at our school, we will not be staggering arrival time in the morning as we know this will cause problems for families. School Gates will open as normal at 8.50 and there will be extra staff on yard to direct pupils to their lines and supervise pupils in their lines. We will be opening the Top Gate for pupils who line up on top yard. The middle gate will be for pupils lining up on the bottom yard. Please see attached map/layout.

As our yards are small and our class lines have been extended to facilitate 1 m distance for pupils lining up, we are asking parents to remain outside the school railings at drop and collection time.

Before school gates open, we are asking parents and pupils to remain in their cars. Pupils who are walking to school please line up outside school gate at 1m distance. The railings have been painted at 1m distance in yellow to assist this physical distance. Line up outside the gate that you will be entering.

Daily Morning Assembly:

Top Yard (Top) Zone A

Mr Gordon 6th Line 1

Mr Malone 6th Line 2

Mr Byrne 5th Line 3

Ms Ryan 5th Line 4

Top Yard (Bottom) Zone B

Mr Coleman 6th Line 1

Ms Floyd 4th Line 2

Mr Moore 4th Line 3

Bottom Yard (top)Main doors Zone C

Ms Jones 4th Line 1

Ms McEvoy 6th Line 3

Mr O Donnell 5th Line 4

Bottom Yard (Bottom) Zone D

Mr Carroll 3rd Line 1

Ms Treacy 3rd Line 2

Ms Bradley 3rd Line 3

If a child appears unwell on entering the school yard or the classroom, the child will be taken to our isolation area. Their temperature will be taken and in the interests of the safety of the staff and the other children, the principal/secretary will contact the parent and ask the parent to take the child home immediately.

Change of Daily Dismissal Times

6th class will be dismissed at 2.30

5th class will be dismissed at 2.30

4th class will be dismissed at 2.35

3rd class will be dismissed at 2.40

Other Responsibilities for Parents:

- It is advisable that each child has their own pack containing their own hand sanitiser, tissues which are **labelled** coming to school. **These must be replaced when empty.** The classroom will have sanitiser, soap and paper towel for general use.
- Parents must ensure that all of the child's equipment/books/copies are labelled with the child's name as equipment/books cannot be shared.

- Parents are to ensure that their child knows and uses the protocols around coughing/sneezing/use of tissues/hand sanitisers prior to returning to school.
- Parents must ensure that all **books/writing equipment/lunch boxes/water bottles** are sanitised using alcohol wipes on completion of homework before being placed in the child's schoolbag.
- Children are to go to the bathroom **before** they leave home for school daily.
- Children are to wash their hands **before** leaving for school,

Parents and Uniforms:

- Children's uniforms must be clean and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols.
- Parents should change their child's uniform regularly during the week and they must be washed after use. This can include the PE uniforms.
- It is recommended that all children have two red jumpers/sweatshirts. Reasonably priced extra jumpers can be bought in Lidl/Penny's/Dunnes.
- [To facilitate parents, pupils may wear either their school uniform or PE tracksuit on any given day.](#)

Protocols if a child becomes unwell or presents as a suspected case of COVID-19 while at school -

- The child will be brought to the Isolation Room by a staff member keeping at least 2 meters apart from the staff member.
- The parent will be immediately contacted and asked to come to the school to take the child either to the doctor or home. The handover will take place at the front door/ school gate.
- A mask will be given to the child to wear until he/she is picked up. The secretary/principal/SNA will remain with the child until he/she is picked up.
- Dedicated waste bins will be in use.
- The staff member caring for the child in isolation should wear personal protective equipment i.e. face mask, disposable apron and gloves.
- The child should be encouraged not to touch surfaces, people or any objects.
- Public transport of any kind should not be used by the parent to take the child home.
- Appropriate cleaning and disinfection of the isolation area and the child's work station will be carried out immediately.
- The principal and the DLW will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form any part of follow up actions.
- The principal will inform the HSE in line with correct protocols.

If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in school.

- The school will be contacted by local Public Health staff of the HSE to discuss the case. They will identify people who have been in contact with the person and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- An assessment will be undertaken by HSE public health staff.
- Advice on the management of children and staff who came into contact with the person will be based on this assessment.

Symptomatic people should self-isolate and arrange to get tested for COVID-19. Confirmed COVID-19 cases should continue to self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days and should not return to school until they are advised that it is safe to do so. Close contacts of a confirmed case (their partner/family member should be notified and go home if at work and restrict their movements for 14 days. They should not attend work during that time.

Children in High-Risk Groups:

Parents should seek advice from their GP/Specialist if they think their child is in a high-risk group. They must make an informed decision if it is safe for their child to return to school on March 15th 2021. They should inform the principal/deputy Principal of the advice given. The Deputy principal has already contacted parents of pupils known to her during August to discuss any possible concerns they might have. If there are any parents who have concerns about their child's health, please email the principal talbotsns@hotmail.com or ring 01-4571226.

Use of Face masks:

- **It is currently not recommended in Ireland for children under 13 to wear face masks as a mitigation strategy against the transmission of the coronavirus. It is currently the opinion of public health that their use, especially among young children, has the potential to cause more harm than good.**