

# COVID RESPONSE PLAN



***Coláiste Cholmcille***  
***College Street***  
***Ballyshannon***  
***Co. Donegal***

School Roll No: 91506V

**School Patron/s: CE Donegal ETB and Bishops of Clogher and Raphoe**

First Ratified by the BOM on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Updated March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – To be ratified at next BOM meeting.

Signed .....

## CONTENTS

1. Letter
2. Covid Policy Statement
3. Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
4. How to limit the introduction of Covid 19
  - a. What to do if symptomatic
  - b. Procedure for returning to work
5. Infection control measures
  - a. Knowing the Symptoms
  - b. Social Distancing
    - i. Students
    - ii. Staff
    - iii. Canteen
    - iv. Corridors
    - v. School Structures and Procedures
  - c. Hygiene Etiquette
    - i. Respiratory Hygiene
    - ii. Hand Hygiene
    - iii. Frequency of Hand Hygiene
  - d. Ventilation
  - e. Use of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) in Schools
    - i. Face Masks
    - ii. Gloves
    - iii. Aprons
  - f. Cleaning
6. Reception Areas and Visitors
7. Training Procedures
8. Dealing with a suspected Case
9. Staff Duties
10. Extra-Curricular
11. Employee Assistance Service
12. Wellbeing of all
13. Publications

**Coláiste Cholmcille**  
**College Street**  
**Ballyshannon**  
**Co. Donegal**

Telephone: 071 9858288

Fax: 071 9851369

School Roll No: 91506V

[info@ccbs.ie](mailto:info@ccbs.ie)

24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are looking forward to welcoming back all our students and staff back to Coláiste Cholmcille next week. We wish to welcome especially our incoming first Year students who will join our school officially for the first time.

Your safety is paramount. We are working hard to ensure that we take and make all the necessary steps to make sure that this happens. Increased separation will be achieved through social distancing inside and outside the classroom and reconfiguring the timetable. Decreased Interaction by introducing base classes. We appreciate that this new norm will take some time to adjust but we know that you can work with us to ensure that this happens and that these systems and protocols are enforced to make Coláiste Cholmcille as safe an environment as possible for us all. We are all making sacrifices.

We will always adhere to HSE and DE (Department of Education) guidelines and advice. Further information can be found on [gov.ie/backtoschool](http://gov.ie/backtoschool)

Our Covid Response Plan outlines the steps and processes that we have introduced to ensure your safety and to help maintain a positive school environment. We also hope that it will help to reassure any fears or anxieties that you may have concerning the re-opening of our school.

Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our school and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our school community. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our school.

The Covid Response Plan is an evolving document and may need to be updated at times. We will communicate any changes with you if this should occur.

The most up to date information can be found on [www.ccbs.ie](http://www.ccbs.ie) and [gov.ie/backtoschool](http://gov.ie/backtoschool) and will be communicated where possible via text and/or email.

Please link into our social media platforms on Facebook and Twitter. As always, your feedback is most welcome.

Kind Regards,

Cora Fagan

Principal



## Section 2: COVID -19 Policy Statement

Coláiste Cholmáille is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our students. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and students on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan in relation to summer provision
- inform all staff and students of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the public health guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and students engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues, or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 3: Lead Worker Representative (LWR):**

Teacher Rep	Mairead Mc Gurren
Non-Teaching Rep	Teresa Mc Groary

Effective communication and a shared collaborative approach are key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return-to-Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared obligation in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students, or others, they should contact the Lead Worker Representative who will engage with school management.

The role of Lead Worker Representative is separate to that of the Safety Representative under the health and safety legislation. However, the Safety Representative may act as the Lead Worker Representative if selected to do so by the staff.

In summary, the role of the Lead Worker Representative is to:

- represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts
- keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice
- work collaboratively with school management to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19
- consult with school management on the control measures required to minimise the risk of staff and students being exposed to COVID-19
- promote good hygiene practices, in conjunction with school management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice
- monitor, in conjunction with school management, adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- conduct reviews of safety measures that are in place to address and suppress COVID-19 in the workplace. Reviews (including an examination of the workplace) should be conducted on a regular basis (at least twice per week)
- report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them
- consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area
- following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required
- consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace

- make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 response plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students, or others, he or she should contact the Lead Worker Representative who will engage with the Principal.

All staff, students, parents, contractors, and visitors have a responsibility, both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

## **Section 4: How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:**

### **Sec 4.1 - What to do if symptomatic**

- Staff and students that have symptoms should not attend school, except for a runny nose, phone your doctor and follow [HSE guidance on self-isolation](#)
- Staff and students should not attend school if you have been identified by the HSE as a close contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the [HSE advice on restriction of movement](#)
- Staff and students who develop symptoms at school must bring it to the attention of the principal (or deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly

### **Sec 4.2 - Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Schools should request staff (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-return-to-work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays

## **Sec 5: Infection Prevention Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools**

- Advise staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test.
- Advise staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
- if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
  - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
  - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
  - Advise staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.

### **Sec 5.1: knowing the Symptoms**

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to [know and recognise the symptoms](#).

They are:

- high temperature
- cough
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

Anyone presenting with symptoms while at school will be accompanied to a designated isolation room where they can wait to be collected. Please try to arrange pick up as soon as you possibly can. Please follow current HSE guidelines on self-isolation.

## **Sec 5.2: Social Distancing:**

**The school community should maintain, where possible, a minimum of 1 metre distance and where possible 2 metres from one another. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face-to-face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.**

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- increasing separation
- decreasing interaction

Coláiste Cholmcille have introduced guidelines for:

### **Students:**

- Students have been assigned specific entrances for entry in the morning and where possible must only use this entrance to enter and leave the building.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Years: Mercy Hall side.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> and TY: Entrance at room 31 into the assembly area.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Years: Entrance beside print room.
- Students should proceed straight to their designated learning space/classroom to avoid congregation in social areas.
- Students will have assigned seating plan. **Do not alter the seating plans.**
- Class Tutors will assign seating plans. Students attending classrooms other than their base room will sit in the seat assigned to them by that teacher.
- First and Second Year Students are required to remain on the school campus at lunch time. It is their responsibility to practice social distancing of at least 1 metre and where possible remain in a “Pod” for break and lunch.
- Face masks, when not eating, must be worn where two metre distancing cannot be maintained.
- Where possible, and timetable permitting we will try to stagger the lunch breaks:
  - Juniors will be released from class 10 minutes early to purchase from the canteen and must then return to their base class, where they can eat their lunch, or exit through their entrance and socialise outside the building.
  - Students can only access their own base class.
  - Senior Students will access the canteen during break at the normal time when the bell goes.
  - Senior Students can remain in the assembly area once they practice social distancing of at least 1 metre.



- Lunch is from 1:15 to 1:55. Junior Students can access the canteen from 1:15 to 1:35. Senior Students can access the canteen from 1:35.
- To manage the queue at lunch time 2<sup>nd</sup> year students will leave their class 10 minutes earlier at 1:05
- Only 6<sup>th</sup> Years and TY students can use the seating area in the Assembly area.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Year Students are to use the Mercy Hall during break and Lunch.
- **No student** is permitted to leave the campus at break.
- Senior Students may leave their bags **in the class** that they are scheduled to have period 5 after lunch, **not outside the door**. **Bags must be left under your seat and not placed beside other bags.**
- Hand washing or sanitising is required when moving between classes by teachers and students.
- It is a requirement that face masks be worn by students when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. (There are exceptions, please see section on face masks below.)
- All students, as always, must remain on the campus at break time.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged.
- Where students need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organised to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource.
- Staff and students should avoid sharing of personal items.
- The uniform and face masks must be washed regularly.
- Where possible, students are encouraged to have their own individual art equipment, where these must be shared, they will be wiped and disinfected after each use. The same applies for other practical classes and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- Musical instruments if shared will be wiped and disinfected after each use. However, lessons involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and so, for now, will not be used.
- PE (Physical Education) Class: The sharing of sports equipment will be minimised and where it is necessary to use such equipment regular cleaning and disinfecting will occur after each use.

#### **Staff:**

- 2 metre distancing is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.
- Multiple Rooms are used as staff rooms at break and lunch to allow use of pods and make social distancing easier.
- If 2 metres cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and updated guidance on face covering must be observed.
- Teachers must facilitate sanitising the chairs, desks, and keyboard in each room after each use. the room will then be ready for the next group to gain entry.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres, where practical, between the teacher and class would be observed. Where this cannot be observed face masks will be worn.
- Additional ventilation is encouraged through keeping windows and doors open as much as possible throughout the day.

- Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.
- Class Tutors will assign seating plans.
- Staff and students should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) are discouraged.
- Minimise gathering at the beginning or end of the school day.

#### **Canteen:**

- Ensure physical distancing is applied in canteen facilities.
- Stagger the canteen use and extend serving times where possible to align with class groupings.
- Implement a queue management system.
- Make sure students clean their hands before and after entering the canteen area.
- Increased supervision and managed queuing system have been introduced

#### **Corridors:**

- Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.
- A one-way system is in place and partitions have been introduced to encourage students to always stay to the left-hand side.

#### **School Structures and procedures**

- Signage to encourage social distancing.
- Base Classes for Junior Cycle Students as far as is practical.
- Rooms have been reconfigured to allow for at least 1 metre social distancing between desks or between individual students. **Do not move tables or seats.**
- We have moved to a 1-hour timetable to reduce movement.
- Where possible and practical double classes have been planned to minimise movement during the day.
- Increased supervision and managed queuing system have been introduced
- Lockers will not be available this year.
- Uniform: Students can wear their PE gear to school on days that they have PE.
- Changing facilities shall not be available for use by pupils due to the increased risk associated with communal areas.
- Students must wear their full uniform to school on all other days to include their uniform crested coat.
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device will be cleaned regularly, and hand hygiene encouraged. One-way systems have been introduced: Students are reminded that they must enter through the entrance that they have been assigned, unless moving to another area in the school. E.g., a first year leaving room 40, going to the Home Economics room, would exit through their entrance and walk around the back of the building and enter again through the senior entrance next to the practical corridor.

- Internal classroom exit doors will be used, under teacher supervision to allow for a one-way system when required. Where movement of class groups between rooms is required, it will be planned to minimise interaction with other class groups.
- Banner/partitions have been placed on the corridors; a walk left/walk right rule still applies
- Toilet blocks have been designated Junior and Senior.

### **Section 5.3: Hygiene Etiquette:**

#### **Respiratory Hygiene:**

- Everyone must follow good respiratory hygiene.
- This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

#### **Hand Hygiene:**

- Staff and students should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.
- There is increased signage promoting good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. [Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing.](#)
- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
- Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins needs to be managed to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.
- Electric hand dryers are an acceptable alternative for hand drying but must be regularly maintained. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.
- Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing are placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.
- Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).
- There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands ☹️ Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame

#### **Frequency of Hand Hygiene:**

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- on arrival at school
- before eating or drinking
- after using the toilet
- after petting animals
- after playing outdoors

- when their hands are physically dirty
- when they cough or sneeze

#### **Section 5.4 Ventilation**

- The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools.'
- The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.
- The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be:
  - open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g., during break-times or lunchtimes (assuming not in use)
  - open at the end of each school day
  - partially open when classrooms are in use.

#### **Section 5.5: Use of PPE in Schools:**

It is now a **requirement** for face masks to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors, or pupils.

Staff, students, or visitors who refuse to wear a face mask, without adequate medical certification as to why, will not be permitted access and/or will be asked to go home. This is in the interests of the health and safety of others within the school community.

PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- performing intimate care
- where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not in the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with people who are in a very high-risk category.
- administering first aid
- parent Teacher meetings

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

#### **Face Masks:**

- Cloth face masks act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face masks are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.
- It is therefore a **requirement** that teachers, staff and students attending Coláiste Cholmcille wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

- Snoods/scarfs or anything resembling are not acceptable. Please see poster below for visual on face masks (coverings).
- In certain situations, the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.
- Cloth face masks should not be worn by any of the following groups:
  - any person with difficulty breathing
  - any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
  - any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
  - any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or extremely uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns, or tactile sensitivity.
- All staff and students wearing face masks should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.
- Information will be provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face masks.
- All teachers and staff should be aware that they should wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering.
- Face masks should be stored safely in a clean Ziplock bag when not being worn.
- Cloth face masks should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face masks should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.
- Additional disposable face masks are available at the school office for students in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day but at a cost of 50 cent each.
- Teaching staff and SNAs should utilize their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools should have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face masks, or in the appropriate setting face visors are available for staff but must be accompanied by a face covering where a social distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- Wearing a face covering or mask **does not** negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.
- Medical Grade Masks
  - Schools must provide medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs (Special Needs Assistants) and teachers in special schools and special classes and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs including School Bus Escorts.

#### **Gloves:**

- The use of disposable gloves in the school by students or staff is not appropriate but may be necessary for matters such as cleaning, intimate care settings or when administering first aid.
- Routine use does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves.
- Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

#### **Aprons:**

- Aprons may also be appropriate in certain circumstances including for intimate care needs or for staff assigned to cleaning an area where a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 was present.

## **Section 5.6: Cleaning:**

- The school will be deep cleaned at least once per day. Additional cleaning will be available and will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.
- Staff should clean and disinfect their work area regularly throughout the day and after each use.
- There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate and so on).

## **Section 6: Reception Areas and Visitors:**

- There is an increased presence of Perspex in reception areas where it is not possible for staff to maintain a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students.
- Staff and Visitors should use the front doors only.
- A mechanical lock system has been installed to secure the building and allow for contact tracing to take place.
- The school will keep a contact tracing log for your own safety.
- Visitors can approach the office by way of a window in the front porch. Please use a face covering.
- A box will be available if items must be dropped off but please try to reduce this occurring. This will be monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Meetings with any member of the school staff is by appointment only.
- Staff will be encouraged to meet over the phone or through Teams if appropriate.
- Visits are restricted for the month of September to give us an opportunity to settle into school life during Covid 19.

## **Section 7: Training:**

- All staff members have completed training on-line.
- Students and staff will receive induction training when they return to school.
- Further information and online tutorials can be found at <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool/#> under: *Information for students and their families about returning to school.*
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>
- All staff informed about the Covid Response Team
- All staff given copy of Response team duties and told what to do in the event of a member of the school community displaying symptoms.
- Staff given Covid First Aid training on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September.

### **Section 8: Dealing with a suspected Case:**

- School staff should be encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.
- School has set up a Covid Response team to deal with all Covid related incidents in school.
- Members of the team are on duty every class and will ensure any member of the school community that displays symptoms are treated in line with HSE guidelines.
- Suspected case is brought to the Isolation Room.
- One member of staff takes control of the room.
- Another member of staff makes necessary phone calls.
- Questionnaire completed with the suspected case in case it proves positive to fully support HSE and contact tracing teams.
- When suspected case has been collected the room is completely sanitised.
- Records are left in the school office.

### **Section 9: Staff Duties:**

Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.

Staff must also:

- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school.
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.

### **Section 10: Extra-Curricular:**

- We will refer to the HSPC guidance on Return to Sport and Extra Curricular activities
- School will follow guidance in Living with Covid document regarding Sport.

### **Section 11: Employee Assistance Service:**

Information updated in this section.

### **Section 12: Wellbeing of All:**

- The wellbeing of our whole school community is of paramount importance during these challenging times.
- All the usual supports will still be available to help students and staff adjust to the new school year.

- We are sure that over time we will adapt to these changes but be sure that we will be there to support you every step of the way.
- JIGSAW: We continue to be “One Good School” Resources and advice will be provided throughout the year.
- Supports are available to staff, students, and parents via the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Home-Page.html>
- Resources are available online using the following link.
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0722b-wellbeing-resources/>
- Coláiste Cholmcille’s COVID-19 Response Plan follows the guidance developed by the HSE and can be found on [gov.ie/backtoschool](http://gov.ie/backtoschool).

### **Section 13: Publications**



# COVID-19 Advice for parents



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

## Symptoms to look out for and when to contact your GP

Schools are back and the winter season is ahead of us. Every year, schoolchildren get colds, flu and other infections. This time, coronavirus (COVID-19) is with us.

**Here is a guide on what symptoms to look out for and what to do if your child is unwell.**

### When to keep your child at home and phone your GP

**Do not send your child to school or childcare if any of the following is true.**

**Your child has:**

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- any other common symptoms of coronavirus such as a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
- been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus

**You will need to:**

1. Isolate your child. This means keeping them at home and completely avoiding contact with other people, as much as possible. Your child should only leave your home to have a test or to see your GP.
2. Phone your GP. They will advise you if your child needs a coronavirus test.
3. Everyone that your child lives with should also restrict their movements, at least until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.
4. Treat your child at home for their symptoms.

### When it's okay to send your child to school or childcare

**It's usually okay to send your child to school or childcare if they:**

- only have nasal symptoms, such as a runny nose or a sneeze
- do not have a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more (as long as their temperature has not been lowered by taking any form of paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- do not have a cough
- have not been in close contact with anyone who has coronavirus
- do not live with anyone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
- have been told by a GP that their illness is caused by something else, that is not coronavirus. Your GP will tell you when they can return to school or childcare
- have got a negative ('not detected') coronavirus test result and have not had symptoms for 48 hours

**Most of the time, you do not need to phone your GP if a runny nose or sneezing are your child's only symptoms. Talk to your pharmacist instead.**

---

## Preventing the spread of illness

Help children to understand and to follow this advice:



Wash their hands regularly



Use tissues or elbows to cover their coughs and sneezes



Keep their distance from people who are sneezing or coughing



Don't share toys



Don't share food at lunch or other times

## More information

Go to [hse.ie/coronavirus](https://www.hse.ie/coronavirus) for more information. This includes advice on the following:

- protecting your child from coronavirus
- if your child has symptoms of coronavirus
- getting urgent medical advice if your child is very unwell
- children with underlying health conditions
- explaining coronavirus to your child
- how your child should wash their hands
- caring for a child isolating and self-isolation
- treating coronavirus symptoms at home
- bringing your child to a test centre and test results

## Flu vaccine

This year, all children aged 2 to 12 years will be offered the children's nasal flu vaccine free of charge. See [hse.ie/flu](https://www.hse.ie/flu)



## For updates visit

[www.gov.ie/health-covid-19](https://www.gov.ie/health-covid-19)  
[www.hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie)

Published: August 2020

Ireland's public health advice is guided by WHO and ECDC advice



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# How to use Face Coverings



Coronavirus  
COVID-19  
Public Health  
Advice

ALWAYS CLEAN YOUR HANDS BEFORE AND AFTER WEARING A FACE COVERING

## Correct Covering

Medical masks should be reserved for health workers or patients in treatment.

If you have been advised to wear a medical mask, always have the coloured side showing and the metal band at the top of your nose.



## Check Your Fit

Check that the face covering is made from a fabric that you are comfortable wearing.



Check that it is easy to fit and completely covers your nose and mouth, all the way down under your chin.



Tighten the loops or ties so it's snug around your face, without gaps. If there are strings, tie them high on top of the head to get a good fit. Do not touch or fidget with the face covering when it is on.



**DO NOT:**  
Wear the face covering below your nose.



**DO NOT:**  
Leave your chin exposed.



**DO NOT:**  
Wear it loosely with gaps on the sides.



**DO NOT:**  
Wear it so it covers just the tip of your nose.



**DO NOT:**  
Push it under your chin to rest on your neck.



## FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO STAY SAFE:

**ALWAYS** wash your hands before and after handling your face covering.

**ALWAYS** change your face covering if it is dirty, wet or damaged.

Carry unused face coverings in a sealable clean waterproof bag, for example, a ziplock.

Carry a second similar type bag to put used face coverings in.

**CHILDREN UNDER 13** should not wear face coverings.

**ALWAYS** wash cloth face coverings on the highest temperature for cloth.

## Safe Removal



Use the ties or ear loops to take the face covering off.

Do not touch the front when you take it off.



## Disposing Of Single-Use Mask



Always dispose of single-use masks properly in a bin.

Don't forget to clean your hands and keep social distance.



Stay safe. Protect each other.



Siobhán Winters  
Government of Ireland

## Advice during COVID-19:

# Back to school Advice for parents



Everyone has been working very hard to ensure a safe reopening of schools for staff, students and their families.

Most students will be looking forward to going back to school and will feel happy and excited. Some may feel a little anxious about returning. That's a normal response at a time of change. Most will settle back in soon once they get used to the new rules and routines.

Remind them of the **positive aspects of returning** – like re-connecting with friends and re-engaging with school activities.



### New rules and routines to follow to keep everyone safe:



- **Good handwashing and hygiene practice** – important for all students. Make sure your child knows to use a tissue to cover coughs or sneezes or to cough or sneeze into their elbow.

- **In senior primary classes and at post-primary** – physical distancing procedures will need to be followed by all.



- **Primary school** – younger children may not be required to practice physical distancing, but they may be organised into pods. There may also be new rules about drop off and pick up.

- Staff in all schools, and post-primary students, should **wear a face covering** where a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills



Advice during COVID-19:

# Back to school Advice for parents



## New rules and routines to follow to keep everyone safe:

- Encourage your child to **walk or cycle to school** if possible and safe to do so.



- **School transport** – students will have an assigned seat and post-primary students will be required to wear a face covering when waiting for and when on-board the bus.

- **Schools will communicate directly with families** about reopening. **Talk together** at home about what to expect when going back to school.



- Having **healthy routines** in place will help with the adjustment of returning to school. Encourage your child to **gradually return to a school term bedtime routine**.

- **Help your child to eat healthily, take exercise and reconnect with friends.**



- Students who have Covid-19 symptoms, including a fever, a cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, or loss or change to their sense of smell or taste should not attend school. **Please follow guidance on HSE.ie on self-isolation and phone your doctor.** Make sure students know that if they feel unwell in school they should tell their teacher straight away.

- **Teachers understand that it hasn't been easy for young people to study at home during school closures.**



**Remember, we all have a role to play in getting everyone back to school safely.**

For more see [gov.ie/backtoschool](https://gov.ie/backtoschool)

Signed:

---

Cora Fagan

Principal

24 August 2020

Updated 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

