



Crehana N.S. Response Plan

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect the lungs and airways and is caused by a new virus called the Coronavirus.

Coronavirus is spread in sneeze or cough droplets. To infect you, it has to get from an infected person's nose or mouth into your eyes, nose or mouth. This can be direct or indirect (on hands, objects, surfaces). If you come into close contact with someone who is shedding the virus and who is coughing or sneezing, or if you touch - with your hands - surfaces or objects on which someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed, and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes without having washed your hands thoroughly, you may contract the virus.

As COVID-19 is a new illness, we are still learning about how easily the virus spreads from person to person and how to control it, so it is important to keep up to date and make sure you are using the most up to date guidance available. This information is available from the following links:

- HSE-HPSC: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>
- HSE Hub: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
- Department of Health: <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/7e0924-latest-updates-on-covid-19-coronavirus/>

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 smell and taste.

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).

Best practice for Parents and Pupils: In order to prevent the spread of the virus:

- 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

You must -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.

You must -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 engage in handshaking or hugging

You 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 childcare 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 each other. 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 Gardaí may be informed or called if needed.

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

- **A child is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19**
- **A child has a temperature, is sneezing, coughing, who has been vomiting or has diarrhea.**
- **A child has been outside of the country in the 14 days prior to September 1st. They are not to attend school but must isolate. They should not return to school until they are advised that it is safe to do so.**
- **A child has been in contact with any family member and or other person who has COVID-19.**

Arrival and departure procedures for children and parents:

- **Parents must arrive on time for leaving in and collecting their child.**
- Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of COVID-19, or who have served the required quarantine time of 14 days where advised, are allowed to drop off and collect children.
- 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)
- Arrival time to the school is between 9:10-9:30 am. (see below)
- On entering the school yard, a parent must ensure their child is dropped in a safe area. Parents are not to congregate in groups or stand around chatting.
- Parents must remain with their child until they are happy their child is safe.
- Parents must ensure their child remains at their side at all times and that their child does not interact with other children on entry.
- Under no circumstances are parents to linger in the parking area after the child has been handed over but are to leave immediately.
- If a parent has more than one child they must remind each child about correct entrance.
- Home times will be staggered for classes from first to sixth- 2:50pm to 3:10pm. (see below)
- Parents must wait outside the school in their cars and maintain social distancing in the evening time when waiting to collect a child.
- The junior and senior infants will go home at the normal time exiting through different doors where possible. This time is staggered between 1:50pm and 2pm.

- All must leave the parking area immediately after collection.
- No parent will be allowed within the school building.
- **Should a matter of urgency arise for parents**, they must phone the office and make an appointment to access the school.
Access will only be permitted once their temperature has been taken, they have used the hand sanitiser and are wearing a face mask. Parents must sign the log book on entry. Once inside the school building they must maintain the required social distance and follow the directions of the principal/staff member.
- A coolbox will remain outside the main entrance door to facilitate drop off of forgotten lunches during the school day. A parent may ring the school secretary to inform that the lunch is there. All items must be labelled with the child's name. A plastic container that has been sanitised is advised for lunches. Items within the coolbox will be sanitised by a staff member before giving to a child.
- At arrival and departure times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.
- Under no circumstances are parents and carers to gather in groups while waiting for the bell to sound.
- Signage will inform where each class group will enter the school.
- Arrival and collection times will be staggered to avoid groups of parents/children congregating together.
- Classes have been assigned specific doors (which will be labelled).

Daily Morning Assembly:

At 9:10am the school doors will be opened.

From 9:10 am Junior infants- 6th classes will enter the school maintaining social distancing through their correct entrance. Staff members and signage will direct children towards their correct entrance. The children will enter the school through their designated door maintaining social distancing. All doors will be marked. Parents will leave school grounds once their child has been handed over. Once a pupil enters their designated entrance their class teacher will be waiting. At 9:30 am school doors will close.

If a child appears unwell on entering the classroom, the child's temperature will be taken and in the interests of the safety of the staff and the other children, a staff member will contact the parent and ask the parent to take the child home immediately.

Daily Dismissal:

1:50pm : Junior infants will exit through their designated door.

2pm – Senior infants will exit through their designated door.

Each child will go to their parents on teachers command. Parents will maintain social distancing using printed areas on path.

(For the first 2 weeks of September Junior infants will leave the school at 12:15pm)

All other children will leave the school in family groups starting with children in 5th/6th class and their siblings and moving down the school.

2:50 pm- Fifth/ Sixth class and siblings of these students. (and bus children)

2:55 pm-Fourth class and siblings

3 pm- Second/ Third classes and siblings

3:05 pm- First class only. (those children with no older siblings)

3:10 – School closes

Please collect your family group at the correct time to facilitate smooth exit from school. Your eldest child dictates collection time.

Unfortunately on wet days we will have to follow the same format morning and evening as we will be unable to maintain social distancing inside the school building at assembly and dismissal times. Therefore staff members and pupils will stand in the rain at these times. Each child needs to have a waterproof coat to facilitate safe practice on wet days. This is a parents' responsibility.

Other Responsibilities for Parents:

- Parents must ensure that all of the child's equipment/books/copies/tissues are labelled with the child's name as equipment/books cannot be shared.
- Children from 1st class up must bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser with them to school, and must use this carefully and responsibly in school. Practise at using hand sanitiser is advised before coming back to school. There are hand sanitising stations also within the school building.
- 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. Each child is responsible for their lunch box and its contents. All waste and rubbish created by a child's lunch will remain in their lunch box to be composted/ disposed of when they return home. Children will need a plastic bag/container to manage messy waste. It is essential that they practise this before coming to school.
- Each child needs two pencil cases, one for home use and one for school use.
- Water bottles are to be filled at home every evening.
- 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.
- The pupils of junior/senior /first class must wear Velcro shoes. Any other children who cannot manage laces must wear Velcro shoes.

Children who may have symptoms:

- **Any child who is unwell with a fever, has a cold, influenza or infectious respiratory symptoms or is displaying any of the symptoms of coronavirus is to stay at home.** The child's parent should contact their GP and seek their guidance on referral for coronavirus testing.
- Temperature testing will take place as is currently the practice for children who may be unwell. Parents will be contacted immediately and must remove the child if the temperature is over 37.5 C.

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.
- It is essential that each parent has a pre-discussed plan in place for collection of a sick child. In the past contact names were given and these contact names would often be elderly relatives. Parents need to check these contacts are willing and comfortable to pick up a sick child.

It is a parents' responsibility to have a realistic, practical backup plan in place.

- A mask will be given to the child to wear until he/she is picked up. A staff member 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.
- It is essential that if a child is referred for a COVID-19 test that the school is informed.

Symptomatic people should self-isolate and arrange to get tested for COVID-19.

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 September 1st. They should inform the principal of the advice given. The principal will ask for written confirmation of GP/Specialist advice. If there are any parents out there who have concerns about their child's health, please contact the principal on 051 641286.

The Minister of Health recently announced that the flu vaccine will be available free to all children aged between 2 and 12 in the coming weeks. The vaccine will be given as drops on the tongue. We are awaiting further information on this and will let you know as soon as we get an update. It is more than likely that the vaccine will be given in the schools so as to avoid thousands of families descending on GPs.

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.
- If a parent wishes their child to wear a mask, this will be permitted. The use of a visor instead will be recommended.

Children's learning spaces:

- All excess furniture will be removed from the classroom where possible so as to provide additional space.
- All staff will reconfigure their classrooms to ensure a one metre distance between pupils where possible. Pupils will be organised into pods within the classroom.
- Classes will be organised into bubbles and interaction between classes outside of the bubble is not to take place.
- Resources that can be easily cleaned will be used and toys and materials that are difficult to clean e.g. dress up clothes or soft toys during this temporary Covid-19 emergency will not to be used.
- Pupils will hand sanitise before and after using any materials.

- Pupils will not be allowed to share materials/resources.
- Additional time will be spent by the hygiene staff in cleaning the school.
- During group work if applicable one group will be removed from the classroom and taught in an open space. This is to ensure that the children are not crowding in on each other within the classroom.

Please respect that this is a living document that will change as we go along. All content is based on current HSE and DES guidelines for the safe reopening of schools. The primary objectives underpinning this document are the:

- Safety and health of all pupils and staff.
- Safe re-opening of school.
- Measures which ensure our school stays open.

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

This plan has been formulated and approved by BoM, Parent's Association and staff. It has been ratified on Wednesday 19th August 2020 by the BoM.

Signed _____

Signed _____

25 February 2021

Following guidelines from the Department of Education, the following amendments have been added to our Response Plan:

Infection Prevention Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

- Pupils should 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
- Pupils should 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 /pupils are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- *Pupils should 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.

Hand Hygiene

- 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

Physical Distancing Ventilation – (In line with The Department 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’)

In Crehana N.S. windows will be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.