



## 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).

We ask parents to note that the Department of Education has updated the list of COVID 19 symptoms in the schools Response Plan August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021. The following is a copy of this updated list:

## 5.1) Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of [cold](#) and [flu](#).

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test.

Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE [Website](#). Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised. If you **do not** have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a [COVID-19 walk-in test centre](#).

### **COVID-19 Tracker App**

COVID Tracker app is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)
- keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19
- give you advice on what to do if you have symptoms

You can download the free app from [Apple's AppStore](#) or the [GooglePlay store](#)

**Employers and workers must keep themselves up to date on Public Health information as this can be updated on a regular basis.** Public Health information on close contacts, casual contacts and testing is available from the HSE website.

**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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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- 6<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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:**

**Response Plan Update**

**Section 5.5**

**Use of PPE in schools**



## **Face coverings in Primary schools**

NPHET has recommended the wearing of face masks/coverings by children aged nine years and above on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings as already required for children aged 13 years and over. They have also recommended that this is introduced for children in 3rd class and above in primary schools. They have advised that this measure is being introduced on a temporary basis and is subject to review in mid-February 2022. Guidance on face masks/coverings in Primary schools. Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

### **Wearing of face masks/coverings**

Pupils from third class and up in primary schools are required to wear a face mask/covering. The exemptions to this are set out below.

### **Face masks/coverings**

Face masks/coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face mask/covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Face masks/coverings 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.

Face masks/coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community. Visors -Face masks/coverings are more effective than visors. In the limited circumstances where a face mask/covering cannot be worn clear visors must be considered.

### **Exemptions**

A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school on behalf of, any person (pupil) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:

- any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions
- any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example pupils with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity. Schools will be best placed to identify those children whose complex needs are such that the wearing of face covering may not be possible for them, and to discuss this with parents as required. In such circumstances a school may not require medical certification to provide an exemption to the wearing of face coverings. In other circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided that person (staff or pupil) will be refused entry to the school.

### **Directions for effective use of face masks/coverings**

- Information should be provided by schools on the proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Advice on how to use face coverings properly can be found here.
- All pupils should be reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.
- Face masks/coverings should be stored in a designated space, for example, in an individually labelled container or bag.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face masks/coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

### **Pupils using school transport**

Pupils from 3rd class and up on the primary transport scheme are required to wear face masks/coverings subject to the exemptions above.

### **Mixed classes in single rooms**

Where there are mixed classes, e.g. 2nd and 3rd class in a single classroom,

schools should note that only children in 3rd class and above, are required to wear face masks. As per previous advice, however, parents of other children who would prefer that their children wear a face mask are not precluded from doing this.

### **Provision of face masks**

Parents should be advised that they obtain face masks for their children which fit properly and are comfortable for the child to wear. In the event that a child forgets, loses or damages their masks during the course of the school day, then the school should have a sufficient supply to replace the mask for the child in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

## **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 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

❖ **Information for Parents re COVID 19 August 2021**



- ❖ **Please complete RETURN TO EDUCATION FORM** in respect of children returning to school and after any absence from school.



❖ **Information for Parents:**

- Video for parents of children in Junior Infants - [https://youtu.be/UomH\\_vakjDI](https://youtu.be/UomH_vakjDI)
- Video for parents of children Senior Infants – RII - <https://youtu.be/4smnni5jpGI>
- Video for parents of children RIII – RVI - <https://youtu.be/97nErW1-0YU>

❖ **Reminders for Parents:**

- Do not congregate at or near school during drop off and collection times
- Communication with the school must take place by phone or online
- School policy in relation to children with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Do not to send children to school if they are:
  - close contacts of a person with COVID-19
  - are awaiting a test
  - are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
  - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
  - if they have travelled outside of Ireland (see latest Govt. advice )

## **Response Plan Update**

### **Section 8**

#### **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19**

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# Use of antigen testing in certain circumstances in children who are asymptomatic and part of a classroom pod, where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19

From [Department of Education](#)

Published on 26 November 2021

Last updated on 2 December 2021

See information on [antigen testing in multiple languages](#).

This is an update on plans to provide for the use of antigen testing in certain circumstances in children who are asymptomatic and part of a classroom pod, where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19.

**The most important way to protect against any onward spread of infection is that if your child has any symptoms of COVID-19, including a new cough, shortness of breath, high temperature, sore throat, they should self-isolate at home and you should book a COVID-19 PCR test for them. [PCR tests can be booked on HSE.ie](#).**

**Children who have symptoms should not use antigen tests. They should stay at home and organise a PCR test for COVID-19. If a parent/guardian has any concerns about their child they should contact their GP.**

From 29 November 2021, if a parent or guardian receives a positive ('detected') PCR COVID-19 test result for their child, we are asking that they contact their child's school principal immediately to let them know.

The principal will then tell this parent/guardian, that they will be contacting the parents of the other children in their child's pod, to give them details of how they can order free antigen tests for their children using a Freephone number. The principal is requested not to share any personal information relating to any other child with parents.

Antigen tests are potentially an extra measure to help protect against transmission of COVID-19. You do the tests yourself at home. The test sample does not have to go to a lab. You usually get your results in 15 minutes.

If just one pod is involved, only the children in this pod will be offered antigen tests. If there are two pods with separate confirmed cases of COVID-19, then parents or guardians of children in the whole class will be contacted and provided with the information on how they can request antigen tests.

You will need to provide your child's name and home address together with the school's roll number, which will be provided by the school, when contacting the Freephone number to order the test.

These tests will be delivered free of charge directly to the parent or guardian at their home address and the child's parent can decide if they want to do the tests. The HSE has prepared instructions and a video for parents. Full details will be in the antigen test pack.

The HSE advises that parents/guardians should carry out the first antigen test for their child on the day that they receive the test kit, they should do a second test 2 days later, and a third test 2 days after that.

The children in the pod of the confirmed COVID-19 case **can continue to attend school** as long as **they have no symptoms and they do not have a positive COVID-19 test result (antigen or PCR)**. If at any time, your child **develops symptoms they should isolate at home and you should book a COVID-19 PCR test for them**. Do this even if the antigen test has a negative ('not detected') result.

If an antigen test is positive, it is important that your child isolates at home and that you [book a COVID-19 PCR test online on the HSE test portal](#).

A QR code will be provided to afford parents the opportunity to upload the result of a test result to inform the HSE. This information is very important to understand the COVID-19 pandemic.

School principals have been requested not to share any information with parents that might identify the positive COVID-19 case.

Participating in antigen testing is a voluntary programme, therefore it is not necessary for parents to share information with the school about whether they have requested antigen tests and undertaken negative tests.

Children who are well should continue to come to school whether they participate in antigen testing or not.

The decision to do antigen testing with your child is completely up to parents and guardians and will have no impact on your child's education or experience in school.

The voluntary programme of antigen testing is an additional measure and does not replace the very important public health measures currently in your school.

We continue to ask that you remind your children of the importance of these measures to stop spread of infection.