Dear families,

Thank you so much for your co-operation and support these past weeks. We have had a very smooth return to school – albeit following extensive work behind the scenes.

Significant measures to protect our school community have been put in place, including extensive signage; hand sanitiser dispensers throughout the school; enhanced cleaning regimes across the school and classrooms; new protocols and policies; changed playground and supervision arrangements; social distancing measures and signage; new classroom layouts and seating arrangements; and the use of face coverings and masks as required. An intercom and shields have also been installed at our school office.

More information on changed school practices are detailed below. Please read these carefully as they may require changes to your own behaviour and what you do at the school or, in relation to sickness, when you send your child to school or keep them home. Thank you again for all the support and co-operation.

**Sick children**

New guidelines have been issued in relation to sick children – Covid and non-Covid. It is essential that every parent familiarise themselves with this information. Two links are provided below to this information.

Link 1: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

Link 2: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/primarycareguidance/adviceriskassessmentandmanagementofpatients/COVID-19%20Assessment%20and%20decision%20making%20pathway%20for%20all%20children.pdf>

In summary, **do not send your child to school if any of the following is true.** Your child has:

* a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
* any other [common symptoms of coronavirus](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html) - a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
* been in [close contact](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html) with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
* been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
* an existing breathing condition that has recently got worse

If your child has symptoms such as [diarrhoea](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/child-health/diarrhoea-in-babies-and-children/overview.html), headaches or a sore throat keep them at home for at least 48 hours. These are not common symptoms of coronavirus, but they could be a sign of another infection.

**Please note, any child given paracetamol (Calpol or Calpol 6+) or ibuprofen (Nurofen or Nurofen 6+) for any reason must not attend school for 48 hours.**

It's usually okay to send your child to school 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 new cough
* have not been in [close contact](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html) 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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html#negative) and have not had symptoms for 48 hours
* have not had diarrhoea for 48 hours

Your child does not need a GP medical certification or a note from a GP to return to school. But their school may ask you to sign a form to say that your child is well enough to attend. This is called a 'parental self-declaration form'.

**Dealing with Covid**

In the event of a positive Covid case in our school, the school will follow the HSE guidelines as set out in the *Schools Pathway for Covid-19, the Public Health Approach*, link here: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/educationguidance/Schools%20Pathway%20for%20COVID-19%20-%20the%20Public%20Health%20approach.pdf>

In the case that a child displays symptoms of Covid-19 at school – a cough, shortness of breath, a temperature above 38 degrees or loss of taste or smell – the school will phone home to have the child collected from school and in the meantime, the child will be moved safely to an isolation room to await collection.

**Face coverings and the school campus**

In the first instance, parents should not enter the school campus unless it is essential or their child requires it. If, however, you must enter the school campus then **we require all parents to wear face coverings on the school campus.** We need the co-operation of all parents to keep all members of the school community safe – protect each other, our children and school staff. To reduce the need to enter the school campus, all children from 3rd to 6th classes may walk home from school unaccompanied with written consent from a parent. Please contact your child’s class teacher to arrange this. Many children could meet their parents in the surrounds of the school campus if they are unable to walk home alone.

Social distancing must be maintained by all on the school campus. Please speak to your child about this as often once dismissed from school the children congregate with their friends with no social distancing. Parents – please keep two metres from each other on the campus. As a reminder, some two metre distancing markers have been placed outside the school doors and gates.

**Behaviour**

It is now a breach of school rules to cough in another person’s face or otherwise threaten their person with Covid or the suggestion of Covid. It is also a breach of school rules to suggest another child has Covid or ridicule a child related to Covid. In some instances, a child in breach of these new rules will be sent home from school.

**School closure**

In the event of a national or regional lockdown and our whole school is required to close, we will revert to online teaching and learning as we did last year. This was conducted through use of the Seesaw App. Parents from senior infants to 6th classes should already have Seesaw. If you do not please contact your child’s teacher to arrange this. For junior infant parents, we will be in touch soon to arrange this. In addition, Class Dojo is our main way of contacting parents and so parents must also download this App. Please contact your child’s class teacher about this.

**Parent teacher meetings**

Parent teacher meetings have been postponed for the first term. The school will assess the possibility of holding these meetings in the second term.