



Ballygarvan NS- Key Facts for Parents and Re-opening Logistics **-Revised August 2021**

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 that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on, 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/>
- Dept of Education: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/schools/>

COVID-19 can be a mild or severe illness. Severe illness is much more common in older people (especially over 70s) 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, (including new symptoms associated with Delta variant), are:

- Cough - this can be any kind of cough, usually dry but not always
- Fever - high temperature over 37.5 degrees Celsius
- Shortness of Breath
- Breathing Difficulties
- Lack of smell.
- Fatigue
- Aches/pains
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Runny/stuffy nose
- Feeling sick
- Diarrhoea

Symptomatic people appear to be most infectious in the early days after symptoms begin. Infection can also spread from people in the day or two before they are symptomatic. It is thought that people are no longer infectious 14 days after they have developed symptoms.

Best practice for Parents and Pupils

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:

- 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
- after contact with bodily fluids (runny nose, spit, vomit, blood, faeces)
- after cleaning tasks

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.

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

Role of Parents:

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

The new protocols may seem onerous for parents and pupils but they are there for everybody's safety. There will be plenty of staff on hand to assist pupils to comply with the protocols when they return to school, in a kind, patient and supportive manner. We are confident they will become second nature to them after a short while. We would ask parents to be patient with school staff as we all settle in to our new routines. We will constantly monitor the procedures and adjust them where necessary.

The following protocols are in place to safeguard the health and safety of everybody. 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 or yard, and/or to leave the school premises themselves. If serious breaches of safety measures occur, the Board of Management may be informed and/or the Gardaí may be called if needed as per Government Guidelines.

Under no circumstances is a parent to bring a child to school:

- **if the child is exhibiting any symptoms of Covid 19-see list above**
- **If a child has travelled to a country which requires quarantine/self-isolation on return. See up-to-date guidance here: <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/>**
- **If the child has been in recent contact with any family member and / or another person who has Covid.**
- **If a child has been told to self-isolate by the HSE**

Arrival and departure procedures for children and parents:

- **Parents must arrive on time for dropping off 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 etc.)**
- **Staggered arrival times will be put in place for 9.00, 9.10 and 9.20am. (See below)**
- **Parents of the pupils from 1st to 6th classes, are requested to remain in their cars and allow the pupils to walk into the school. There will be a designated entrance door for each class and pupils will proceed straight to their classrooms upon entry to the building. 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes will be admitted at 9.10am and 4th, 5th and 6th classes will be admitted at 9.20am. (See details below).**
- **The entrance gates will be supervised in the morning and afternoon, to ensure these procedures are followed. Only staff cars, and cars that have special needs badges, will be admitted to the school grounds.**
- **On entering the school yard, pupils must proceed immediately to their designated door. They should not congregate in groups or stand around chatting.**
- **The school gates will open at 9am and the parents of the Junior and Senior infant classes *only*, may accompany their children to their designated class entry door. On entering the**

school yard, a parent must proceed immediately to the designated door. They should not congregate in groups or stand around chatting and should observe the 2m distancing rule.

- They must remain with their child until handover has taken place. Parents will be encouraged to “Hug and Go” when the Class Teacher arrives.
- Parents must ensure their child remains at their side at all times and does not interact with other children.
- Under no circumstances are parents to linger in the yard after the child has been handed over but are to leave immediately.
- If a parent has more than one child, the other children stay with them and having handed over the first child, they may proceed to their entrance door at their designated time.
- Parents of the pupils from 1st to 6th classes, are requested to remain in their cars and allow the pupils to walk into school. Pupils should observe distancing rules on their way to school and on footpath in GAA grounds. There will be a designated entrance door for each class and pupils will proceed straight to their classrooms upon entry to the building. 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes will be admitted at 9.10am and 4th, 5th and 6th classes will be admitted at 9.20am. On entering the school yard, pupils must proceed immediately to the designated door. They should not congregate in groups or stand around chatting.
- The children who arrive by bus will be supervised on arrival and allowed off the bus at their designated times
- The Junior and Senior Infants will be collected at 1.40pm. They will be brought to their designated door and handed over to parents. A parent must line up on the designated line/spot, maintaining social distancing and wait for their child.
- Home times will be staggered for classes from first to sixth- 2.50pm and 3pm.
- Parents must wait outside the school, (preferably in their cars), but if not possible, maintaining social distancing, when waiting to collect a child after school.
- All pupils and parents must leave the yard 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 for access.

Access will only be permitted once their temperature has been taken, they have used the hand sanitiser, and filled in the Contact Log for future tracing. Once inside the school building they must maintain the required social distance and follow the directions of the principal/staff member.

- At arrival and departure times, 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.
- Markings on the ground will note where a class/parent can line up.
- 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)

Designated entry and exit doors:

<u>Junior Infants:</u>	Mrs Marshall:	Door 1	(Near infant rooms)
	Mrs. Elliffe:	Door 2	(Main door near Secretary’s office)
<u>Senior Infants:</u>	In Ni Annrachain:	Door 3	(Right hand side of hall)
	Ms. Walsh:	Door 4	(Left hand side of Hall)
<u>1st Class:</u>	Ms. Corcoran:	Door 5	(Near basketball courts)

	Ms. O' Mahony:	Door 6	(At rear, near Principal's office)
<u>2nd Class:</u>	Mr O' Halloran:	Door 4	
	Ms. Corkery:	Door 1	
<u>3rd Class:</u>	Mr Budds:	Door 2	
	Ms. Wyndham:	Door 5	
<u>4th Class:</u>	Mr. O' Shea:	Door 6	
<u>5th Class:</u>	Ms. Keohane:	Door 4	
	Ms. Ronan:	Door 3	
<u>6th Class:</u>	Ms. Hamilton:	Door 2	
	Mr. O' Neill:	Door 1	

If a child appears unwell on entering the classroom, their temperature will be taken and, in the interests of the safety of all children and staff, their parent will be contacted to take the child home.

Other Responsibilities for Parents:

- Parents must ensure that their child has his/her own hand sanitiser, tissues, wipes and mask (if desired), in their own washbag which is labelled coming to school. **These must be replaced when empty.**
- At the moment, the advice is that children under the age of 13, do not need to wear a mask. If you decide your child should wear a mask, it will be allowed. Please teach your child about correct mask etiquette and hygiene. The mask should be changed and washed every day.
- Parents must ensure that all of the child's equipment/books/copies are labelled with the child's name as equipment/books cannot be shared.
- Parents are to ensure that their child knows and uses the protocols around coughing/sneezing/use of tissues/hand sanitisers **prior to returning to school.**
- Parents must ensure that all **books/writing equipment/lunch boxes/water bottles** are sanitised using alcohol wipes on completion of homework before being placed in the child's schoolbag.
- Water bottles are to be filled **at home every day.**
- Pencils to be pared at home and copies ruled, if requested by teacher.
- 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:

- Our school community has consistently agreed, when surveyed, that our pupils should wear a school uniform. To comply with Covid-19 hygiene requirements, children's uniforms must be clean, and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols. *We recognise that washing and drying uniforms can be an onerous task especially in the winter time, so we will not be notifying pupils or parents if the uniform*

*is not worn occasionally, (but alternative clothing must be appropriate). We do **not** want to add to pupils' or parents' stress at this difficult time.*

- Parents should change their child's uniform during the week and they must be washed after use. This can include the PE uniform. The red polo shirt may be worn if shirts can't be washed and dried on time. The PE uniform may be worn at least twice a week. If the school uniform is not worn occasionally, the clothes the pupils wear should also be washed after use.
- It is recommended that all children have two jumpers. Reasonably priced, generic uniforms can be bought in any department store and the school office can sell an iron-on crest. Or Cahill's in Carrigaline sell the crested jumper/cardigan.
- Children will be outside every day, unless it is dangerous for the pupils to be outside. This is for their own health and to allow the classrooms to ventilate. We ask you to make sure pupils are wearing appropriate coats and footwear, for the expected weather, every morning.
- The pupils of junior/senior /first class or any pupils who can't tie their own laces, must wear Velcro shoes.

Children who may have symptoms:

- **Any child who is unwell or is displaying any of the symptoms of coronavirus is to stay at home.** (See list of symptoms above).
The child's parent should contact their GP and seek their guidance on referral for coronavirus testing.
- Temperature testing will take place for children who are feeling 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.
- A mask will be given to the child to wear until he/she is picked up. The secretary/principal/SNA will remain with the child until he/she is picked up.
- The staff member caring for the child in isolation will wear personal protective equipment i.e. face mask, disposable apron and gloves.
- Dedicated waste bins will be used for the disposal of PPE.
- The child will 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 Lead Worker's Representative will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form 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.
- Pupils will not be readmitted to school without a doctor's letter/proof of negative Covid-19 test.

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

Children in Very High Risk Groups:

Parents should seek advice from their GP/Specialist if they think their child is in a very high risk group. See <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/> for advice.

They must make an informed decision if it is safe for their child to return to school on August 27th. They should inform the principal of the advice given, and provide a letter from the medical practitioner if their child is not returning to school.

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 officials that their use, especially among young children, has the potential to cause more harm than good.
- If you decide your child should wear a mask, it will be allowed. Please teach your child about correct mask etiquette and hygiene. The mask should be changed and washed every day.

Children's learning spaces:

- All excess furniture has been removed from the classroom, where possible, so as to provide additional space.
- All staff have reconfigured their classrooms to ensure a **one metre distance between pupils, where possible**. Pupils will be organised into groups or "pods" within the classroom, a one metre distance will be kept between pods, and contact between pods will be minimised.
- Classes will be organised into "bubbles" and interaction between classes outside of the bubble will not take place.

- All Special Ed teachers will be assigned to a minimum number of classes and will supervise those classes on yard also. Parents of pupils with Special Educational Needs will be contacted separately before school commences.
- 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. Steam cleaners have been purchased to help with this process.
- Pupils will hand sanitise before and after using any materials.
- Pupils will not be allowed to share materials/resources.
- Toilet breaks will be staggered.
- The toilets will be disinfected regularly, by a cleaner who will be on-site during the school day.
- The BOM has arranged to increase cleaning hours so additional time will be spent by the hygiene staff in cleaning the school.

Additional Information:

- There will be a specific one-off timetable for Junior Infants on Monday the 30th of August, to allow parents come into the school and settle their children in their rooms, on a rota basis. The class teachers will send that timetable and specific procedures to the relevant parents on Friday the 27th of August. Junior infants will finish at 12 noon from Monday 30th of August until Friday the 10th of September. From Monday the 13th of September, the infants will finish at 1.40pm.
- We will not be setting traditional homework for the first two weeks when the pupils return, as we want to settle them into their new routines, spend time on hygiene lessons and model the homework practice for the pupils. Hopefully the weather will be kind, and pupils can play outside while there is still some light available in the evenings. When homework does recommence, we will be using the Seesaw App to record the items of homework and will expect some items to be returned via Seesaw. This should help to familiarise parents and pupils with Seesaw, in case it becomes necessary for blended or distance learning at a later date.