



**SCOIL MHUIRE TRIM**

Patrick Street, Trim, Co. Meath,



# Return to school

## Staff Information Booklet

### Return to Work Form

The revised Return to Work Form must be completed by all staff prior to return to work. Staff should confirm (verbally or in writing) that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

### Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

In order 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

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](#).

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

If you have any common 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](#). If you **do not** have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a [COVID-19 walk-in test centre](#).

### **Health Advice on Handwashing, Respiratory Etiquette, Face Masks, Gloves and PPE**

All official guidelines from the Government and the HSE must be followed. Maintain social distance and follow recommendations carefully. These guidelines are liable to change and we will cater to any changes if and when they occur.

All Covid-19 signage related to hand washing, respiratory etiquette, face masks and general procedures are displayed throughout the school building.

### **Advice on Hand Hygiene**

Staff and students should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Schools should promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

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 so as to avoid congregation of students and staff waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

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.

Hand sanitiser dispensers can be deployed more readily at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms and care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitizer spills to prevent risks of falls.

Warm water is preferable to hot or cold water for hand washing but if the plumbing system only supplies cold water, a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water should be used.

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities should be provided in all toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas.

Hand washing facilities should be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels should be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them. Hot air 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 should be placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities and can be laminated or placed in a plastic sleeve.

Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

Evidence of effectiveness is best for alcohol based hand rubs but non-alcohol based hand rubs can be used too.

When hand rubs/gels are being used in school care should be taken to ensure that students do not ingest them as they are flammable and toxic. Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

## **Respiratory Hygiene**

Make sure you and the people around you, 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 general waste bin (not the green recycle bin) and wash your hands. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

## **Face Coverings**

Staff must wear face coverings (masks) if a 2 metre physical distance cannot be maintained. – Wearing a face covering **does not** negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic. It is advisable to wear face masks at all times unless eating or drinking.

[Advice on how to properly use face coverings can be found here.](#)

## **PPE Advice**

PPE (other than face coverings) will not be required to be worn within schools according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas or other reasons. These might include roles where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation e.g. cleaning staff cleaning the isolation area

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases and for the administration of first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

## **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by students or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for matters such as cleaning. 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.

## **Dealing with a suspected case**

**See section 8 on the updated Covid 19 Response plan page 23.**

### **Staff Duties**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties.

The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.

In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- New staff must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Coordinate practices and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- ✓ Follow the HSE guidance if they are identified as a close contact.
- ✓ 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.

- ✓ If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- 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 as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health
- If you have been in contact with someone who is a confirmed case or if you or a member of your household are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, you must stay at home, inform the school and follow HSE guidelines.

### **Staffroom**

The staffroom has been reconfigured to maximize space that allows for social distancing. During break and lunch times, there are a limited number of people allowed to use the staffroom. Other rooms are available for staff to have lunch in, kettles, microwaves, fridges, tea/coffee are available in these rooms. It's not ideal but we have no other option under the circumstances and we will review it. You must bring your own cutlery/crockery for personal use - there will be no cutlery/crockery available for use in the kitchen area. You are responsible to clean your own equipment and utensils (cups, cutlery, plates etc).

The additional staff pods are: Old Year Head Office, Preparation room in Prefab 12, R24, Prefab 8 and the Oratory.

Staff movement around the building and interaction should be minimised at all times. We must reduce interaction between staff members with each other and with ancillary staff. In particular, staff members should minimise their physical contact with secretarial staff in the offices.

### **Movement around the school**

There will be a one-way system in operation around the school. **All staff and students must follow this system.** There will be numerous designated entry and exit points in the school building.

### **Classrooms**

Classrooms remain teacher based. Resource lockers in classrooms have been moved out of rooms in order to maximise the space in the room for physical distancing. The number of chairs and desks in rooms are in line with physical distancing. All creative work on noticeboards etc will remain. Teachers will be required to supervise the sanitisation of desks and chairs at the beginning and end of each class.

### **Post & Administration Office**

There can no longer be deliveries of personal post or packages for staff members to the school. This is to minimise entry of outside people such as delivery people/couriers to the school as much as possible and to minimise contact between the staff, the secretarial team and the outside population. The administration office is a designated work space for administrative staff. There will be no entry to this office. Phones in the office are for use by administration staff only. Staff can use the phone outside the front office. Other phones are available in the P.E. Office and Year Head Office.

### **Staff Wellbeing**

Support for school staff wellbeing is being provided by Department Support Services including the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and the Centre for School Leadership (CSL), as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team. An [Occupational Health Strategy](#) is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided

by Spectrum.life. They are providing this support under the banner of '*Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile*'.

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. Spectrum Life will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

### **Control Measures**

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, do not attend school, phone your doctor and follow [HSE guidance on self-isolation](#)
- If you develop symptoms at school, bring this to the attention of the Principal (or Deputy Principal if the Principal is unavailable) promptly.
- You need to familiarise yourself with the [protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school](#)
- Everyone entering the school building must perform hand hygiene by washing their hands at the wash stations or by using the hand sanitiser.
- Remember that all visitors/parents/guardians to the school should be by prior arrangement with the Principal and limited to essential visitors only and should be received at a specific contact point – front reception only.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between staff and essential visitors where possible.



- Social, physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) are discouraged.

### **COVID-19 Shared Folder**

For up-to-date information about our response to COVID-19 documents can be found on the COVID-19 shared folder on Office 365. This will be regularly updated and maintained over the course of the year.

### **Assembly/Speakers/Trips Out**

No assemblies or gatherings of year groups will take place for the foreseeable future. Please do not arrange speakers/visitors that require year groups to gather as a whole.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Extra-curricular activities – Awaiting advice relating to all extra-curricular activities.

### **Form time**

Students are in their designated form rooms for form time and break times.

### **Roll Call /Form Time/Teachers & Year Heads**

Form teachers or year heads (only) must take the roll at form time.

The Deputy Principal/Principal/Year Head will record the suspension/detention on VShare.

### **Toilet Breaks during Class time**

Student toilet breaks **will not be** recorded in their journal. The class teacher **must** record it on VShare under “positive behaviour” at the time the student leaves class. This allows us to trace and record movement during class time. Students must record the time in their journal themselves but there will be no signature from the teacher.

Students will use the toilet area closest to their classroom/form room.

### **Supervision**

Supervision arrangements are in place to monitor movement and prevent congregation of groups. The arrangements will be the same as per academic year 2020-2021

**Lead Worker Representatives** – Michael Mulvihill (second person to be appointed)

And finally, let's all work together to keep our school community safe in these unprecedented times. The ever-evolving situation will require constant review and we ask for your support and understanding as we adapt to the new normal.

The Students and Parents/Guardians information booklets have been revised and will be shared with them.