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

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; pupil-pupil, teacher-teacher and teacher- pupil and must be managed in all settings.

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

*Staff should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.*

**How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:**

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms

* Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
* Advise staff and pupils to 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
* Advise staff and pupils 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 are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
* Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
* Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
* Advise staff and pupils to 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;
* Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
* Visitors to the school during the day shouldbe by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point;
* Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

**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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/common-cold.html) and [flu](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/flu-symptoms-and-diagnosis.html).

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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/self-isolation/how-to-self-isolate.html) (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need [a COVID-19 test](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/testing/how-to-get-tested.html). Other people in your household will need to [restrict their movements](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/managing-coronavirus-at-home/if-you-live-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus.html) (stay at home).

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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html).

**Common symptoms**

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

* [a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/fever-in-adults.html)
* [a new cough](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/cough.html) - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
* [shortness of breath](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/shortness-of-breath.html) or breathing difficulties
* [loss or change to your sense of smell or taste](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/lost-or-changed-sense-of-smell.html) – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

You may not have all of these symptoms. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.

An early diagnosis from your GP means you can get the help you need and avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.