

# Harold's Cross NS



## Reopening of Schools Covid Response Plan

August 2020

**(Parents' Information)**

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## Facts for Parents

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/>
- 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

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). People are no longer infectious for other people 14 days after they have developed symptoms.

## **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**

**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.

**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.

**Not engage in handshaking or hugging**

**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.

## Role of Parents

It is important that parents have a clear understanding of the benefits and risks 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 police may be informed or called if needed.**

### **Under no circumstances is a parent to bring a child to school if -**

- the child is exhibiting any symptoms of Covid 19.
- the child has a temperature, is sneezing, coughing, who has been vomiting or has diarrhoea.
- the child has been outside of the country in the 14 days prior to August 27<sup>th</sup>, they are not to attend school but must isolate
- the child has been in contact with any family member and or other person who has Covid.
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### **Arrival and departure procedures for children and parents**

- **Parents must arrive on time for leaving in and collecting their child. This is vital. Do not turn up late. There will be no-one to let your child in if you arrive late or to mind them in the evening time.**
- 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.)
- Staggered arrival times of pupils/parents will be put in place for 8.15 am and 8.30am to avoid groups of parents/children congregating together (See below)
- On entering the school yard, a parent must proceed immediately to their child's Line Up area. They are not to congregate in groups or stand around chatting.
- They must remain with their child until handover has taken place.
- Parents must ensure their child remains at their side at all times and that their child 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 the second line up area or wait in the car.
- Home times will be staggered for classes from first to sixth - 2.10pm and 2.20pm.
- Parents must wait outside the school in their cars and maintain social distancing when waiting to collect a child. A parent must line up on the designated line/spot, maintain social distancing and wait for their child.
- The junior and senior infants will go home at the normal time exiting through different doors where possible.

- All 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 to gain access.  
Access will only be permitted once they have used the hand sanitiser. Once inside the school building they must maintain the required social distance and follow the directions of the principal/staff member. You must sign the tracing log.
- Markings on the ground will note where a class lines up.
- Arrival and collection times will be classes have been assigned specific doors noted **Doors A to F** (which will be labelled)
- Parents must inform outside groups collecting children for outside After School Homework clubs that they must come at the designated times. Teachers will not be supervising children who have not been picked up in time. (Please be aware that your child may be travelling with children from other schools if they are going to outside After school facilities)

## Daily Morning Assembly

**At 8.10am** the main gates will be opened.

**At 8.15am** the pupils/parent of **junior infants, first, third and fifth** will enter the school maintaining social distancing.

The parents will proceed to their assigned line up. Children must stay with their parents at all times.

<b>Junior infants (1)</b> Ms Lowe	R.11	enter via <b>Door F</b> (at the back of the school)
<b>Junior infants (2)</b> Ms Murray	R.10	enter via <b>Door F</b>
<b>First class (1)</b> Ms O Connor	R. 4	enter via <b>Door E</b> (lower door- main yard)
<b>First class (2)</b> Ms Murray	R. 5	enter via <b>Door D</b>
<b>Third class(1)</b> Ms. Brannigan	R. 1	enter via <b>Door G</b> (the front hall door)
<b>Third class (2)</b> Ms Connor	R. 2	enter via <b>Door A</b> (the front door)
<b>Fifth class (1)</b> Mr Glynn	R.15	enter via <b>Door C</b>
<b>Fifth class (2)</b> Mr Mac Con Iomaire	R.16	enter via <b>Door B</b>

Parents will leave the yard immediately once their child has been handed over. (If they have pupils in other classes, they may proceed to their line up area and wait maintaining social distancing or wait in the car until 8.25)

**8.25.** The parents and pupils of **senior infants, second fourth and sixth** may enter the yard and line up on the designated lines and wait for the bell to ring.

<b>Senior infants (1)</b> Ms K Judge	R. 9	enter via <b>Door F</b> (at the back of the school)
<b>Senior infants (2)</b> Ms O'Connor	R. 8	enter via <b>Door F</b> (at the back of the school)
<b>Second class (1)</b> Ms. Kindlon	R.7	enter via <b>Door D</b> (in the main yard)
<b>Second class (2)</b> Ms O Meara	R. 6	enter via <b>Door E</b> (in the main yard)
<b>Fourth class (1)</b> Mr Manning	R.17	enter via <b>Door C</b>
<b>Fourth class (2)</b> Ms R. Judge	R.18	enter via <b>Door B</b>
<b>Sixth class (1)</b> Ms Curtis	R.13	enter via <b>Door G</b> (the front hall door)
<b>Sixth class (2)</b> Ms. Moriarty	R.14	enter via <b>Door A</b> (the front door)

Parents will line up with their children who are to stay with their parents at all times.

**8.30am:** the teachers will collect the children and parents leave the yard immediately.

**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, the principal will contact the parent and ask the parent to take the child home immediately.**

## Daily Dismissal

**1.10pm:**

<b>Junior infants 1 &amp; 2</b>	R10 & R11	exit through <b>Door F</b> (at the back of the school)
<b>Senior infants (1)</b> Ms Judge	R. 9	exit through <b>Door E</b> ( in the main yard)
<b>Senior infants (2)</b> Ms O' Connor	R. 8	exit through <b>Door D</b> (in the main yard)

Those pupils going to the Art Club will line up at the top of the line and enter the Art Club –Monti staff to await their arrival at the Montessori door.

**2.10pm: The following classes will leave:**

<b>First class (2)</b> Ms O' Connor	R.4	exit via <b>Door E</b>
<b>Second class (1)</b> Ms Kindlon	R.7	exit via <b>Door D</b>
<b>Third class (2)</b> Ms Connor	R.2	exit via <b>Door G</b>
<b>Fifth class (2)</b> Mr Mac Con Iomaire	R16	exit via <b>Door B</b>
<b>Fourth Class (1)</b> Mr Manning	R.17	exit via <b>Door C</b>
<b>Sixth class (1)</b> Ms Curtis	R.13	exit via <b>Door A</b> (the front door)

**2.15/2.20pm: The remaining classes will exit 5-10 minutes later:**

<b>First class (2)</b> Ms Murray	R.5	exit via <b>Door D</b> (in the main yard)
<b>Second class (2)</b> Ms O Meara	R.6	exit via <b>Door E</b> (in the main yard)
<b>Third class (1)</b> Ms. Brannigan	R.1	exit via <b>Door G</b> (the front hall door)
<b>Fourth class(2)</b> Ms Judge	R.18	exit via <b>Door C</b>
<b>Fifth class (1)</b> Mr Glynn	R. 15	exit via <b>Door B</b>
<b>Sixth class (2)</b> Ms Moriarty	R.14	exit via <b>Door A</b> (the front door)

Those pupils from first to fourth going to Homework Club will be collected by SNAs and delivered to the Club. Fifth and sixth class pupils may go on their own. They will line up at the rear of the lines.

## Other Responsibilities for Parents:

### Parents and Books/ Equipment

- Parents must ensure that their child has his/her own hand sanitiser and box of tissues which are **labelled** coming to school every day. **These must be replaced** when empty. (Please buy boxes of tissues as opposed to the small packets.)
- 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. If possible to also put plastic covers on the books which can then be wiped down at home.
- 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 school bag at night.
- Water bottles are to be filled **at home every evening.**
- Pencils to be paired at home and copies ruled.
- Children are to go to the bathroom **before** they leave home for school in the morning.
- Children are to wash their hands **before** leaving for school

### Parents and Uniforms/ Shoes

- 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 at least twice during the week and they must be washed after use. This can include the PE uniforms
- It is recommended that all children have two jumpers. (There are a number of tracksuit tops/jumpers in the lost property if any parent wants to take them.) Reasonably priced uniforms can be bought in Lidl/ Pennys/ Marks & Spencers and Dunnes or from the Uniform Shop (more expensive.)
- **The pupils of junior/senior /first class 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 during the day. 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.
- 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 part of any follow up actions required
- 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.

*Please note at this point we do not know if a class where there is a case, will be sent home or if the school will be closed. That will be a decision made by the Public Health authorities.*

Close contacts of a confirmed case (their partner/family member should be notified and go home if at work and restrict their movements for 14 days. They should not attend work during that time and arrange to get tested.

**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 August 27th. They should inform the principal of the advice given. The principal has already contacted parents of pupils known to her during August to discuss any possible concerns they might have. If there are any parents out there who have concerns about their child's health, please contact the principal on **(01) 4922321**.

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**

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 that their use, especially among young children, has the potential to cause more harm than good.

- If a parent wishes their child to wear a mask, this will be permitted.
- The use of a visor instead will be recommended.

## **What has been done to date and will be done to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders:**

- A thorough Risk Assessment has been carried out by staff and a Covid 19 Return to Work Plan drawn up.
- All excess furniture has been removed from classrooms where possible so as to provide additional space.
- Contact tracing will take place.
- All staff have reconfigured their classrooms to ensure a one metre distance between pupils/ pods of pupils where possible.
- Sanitisers have been put in place outside of all classroom doors.
- Signage on hand/respiratory hygiene has been placed in high usage locations, in toilets and at all sinks
- PPE equipment has been purchased for those staff who may need it during the course of the day.
- Staff will be completing webinars prepared by psychologists on Covid 19 and how best to support the children during their first days and weeks in school.
- Pupils from third up will be organised into pods within classrooms.
- Classes will be organised into bubbles and interaction between classes outside of the bubble will not take place where possible.
- 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 use hand sanitiser before and after using any materials.
- Pupils will not be allowed to share materials/resources where possible.
- Arrival/Home times will be staggered.
- Toilet breaks will be staggered.
- Lunch break will be staggered.
- The toilets will be disinfected by the caretaker after small break.
- During English, Maths and Gaeilge Power Hours 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.
- Staff will use visors or masks in the classroom/ corridors if they wish.
- Some staff may have screens on their desks if they wish.
- All staff will complete many sessions on wellbeing and reducing anxiety around Covid or around any other concerns the children might have on their return.
- Lessons on hand and respiratory hygiene, lining up, social distancing etc will be done by the staff.

We hope that all of these measures will go some way to provide reassurance to you, the children and to our staff. Remember you may have to fight a battle more than once to win it and that it is our reaction to adversity, not adversity itself, that determines how our lives will progress.

**AR SCÁTH LE CHEILE A MHAIRIMID. (BY PULLING TOGETHER WE WILL KEEP GOING)**