

**COVID-19 Updated Arrangements for Post-Primary Schools (5.1.2022)**  
**Based on Department of Education and Skills Information Note SD 002/2022 and**  
**HSE Memo to School Principals**

Arrangements noted here apply from 6<sup>th</sup> January to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

Prevention of the introduction and spread of COVID-19, in line with public health advice, is a key priority in schools.

This means that we must:

- Ensure no-one with new onset symptoms attends schools, and
- That all recommended infection prevention and control measures are in place and complied with, in line with our COVID-19 Response Plan.

**Key prevention and risk reduction measures in school include:**

- Good ventilation,
- correct mask-wearing (securely over the nose and mouth),
- hand hygiene – including sanitizing hands each time a person enters the building,
- enhanced cleaning
- maximising physical distancing (particularly when masks are removed for eating), and
- home antigen testing.

Please be aware of the following:

- **Symptoms:** Your child must **NOT** come to school if he/she has any symptom of COVID-19. Parents are advised by the HSE to take a precautionary approach – observe the child at home and contact the GP, as appropriate. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:
  - fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above) - including having chills
  - dry cough
  - fatigue (tiredness)
  - COVID-19 symptoms can be like symptoms of cold, flu or hay fever

Less common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this could mean they're completely gone or just different to normal
- nasal congestion (runny or blocked nose)
- conjunctivitis (also known as red eye or pink eye)
- sore throat
- headache
- muscle or joint pain (aches and pains)
- different types of skin rash
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhoea
- chills or dizziness

Symptoms of severe COVID-19 include:

- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss of appetite
- confusion
- pain or pressure in the chest
- fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)

- A person may not have all of the symptoms or symptoms may be mild. Symptoms may vary for different age groups or different variants of the virus.
- A person can still get infected if they are fully vaccinated but symptoms may be mild.
- It can take up to 14 days after a person is infected for symptoms to show. He/she can spread COVID-19 during this time.

(see <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/symptoms/overview/>)

See <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/restricted-movements/restricted-movements/#related-situations-you-might-be-in> also for situations pertaining to restricting movements). If a student is identified as a close contact of a case of COVID-19, he/she must adhere to the HSE advice on the HSE website in relation to restricting movement and testing. The 'infectious period' is the timeframe during which someone with an infectious disease can spread it to other people – the 'infectious period' for COVID-19 includes the 24 hours before testing for asymptomatic cases, or the 48 hours before symptom onset for symptomatic cases.

- **Public Health Messages:** In addition to not attending school if a student has any COVID-19 symptoms, please be reminded of the importance of abiding by national public health measure currently in place at all times e.g. vaccination (including boosters), social distancing, use of face masks, hand hygiene, ventilation and minimising social contacts.
- **Ventilation:** Windows are partially opened when rooms are occupied to allow for ventilation and reduce the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. They are fully opened for a short time between classes and at break times to allow fresh air to enter the room and remove carbon dioxide. Rooms are supplied with CO2 monitors and, where necessary, heap filters to support ventilation.
- **Students and COVID-19:** If a post-primary student tests positive for COVID-19 they will be contact traced by the National Contact Tracing Team, who will contact them and ask them to identify their close contacts. The student will have to isolate for ten days from the day their symptoms started or for ten days from the day they had the positive PCR test. The student can return to school after this isolation period, provided they do NOT have a fever/temperature during the last five days of their isolation period and are free of symptoms. **Students who have symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home, isolate and arrange to have a COVID-19 test.** There are two types of tests from the HSE: antigen tests (home test kits) and PCR tests (done at a test centre and sent to a lab). Students who have symptoms of COVID-19 should do home antigen tests firstly and do not need to book a PCR test unless they get a positive antigen test result.
- If a student is identified as a **CLOSE CONTACT** of a case in their HOUSEHOLD they will have to restrict their movement as per national guidelines for household close contacts and get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. Follow HSE advice and do not come to school during this time.
- Further information is available from <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/get-tested/>
- Given the extremely high prevalence of COVID-19 in the community currently, it is anticipated that a number of students, teachers and ancillary staff alike will be identified as having COVID-19 or household close contacts of someone with COVID-19. We endeavour to source substitute teachers where teachers are absent, but as you may be aware, there is a significant shortage of sub teachers available to schools. The Department of Education and Skills advises that if operational challenges occur due to staff absences schools are expected to maximise on-site education for State Examination year groups and Fifth Year students. Remote teaching is expected to be provided to classes staying at home, should this situation arise. Schools should also prioritise in-person teaching for children with special educational needs.
- In the event of the emergency remote teaching and learning plan being activated, the key expectations are as follows:
  - Regular engagement with students – Teachers should, as far as possible, engage with students as per the normal school timetable,

- A blend of guided and independent learning experiences: Teacher-student engagement should involve both direct teaching by the teacher and the assignment of independent learning tasks for completion by students,
  - Appropriate and engaging learning opportunities -The chosen learning tasks should give students and opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a clear and concise way,
  - Learning tasks – The tasks should be specifically aligned to the needs of the student, including students with special educational needs, and should enable the teacher to monitor progress and give constructive, developmental feedback to support the next stages in their learning,
  - Two-way feedback between home and school is encouraged.
- Schools will endeavour to support students' learning and wellbeing during this time.
  - Please ensure that we have up-to-date contact details for you, as parents, in the event that we need to contact you at short notice in particular. This includes a mobile phone number and email address.
  - Please ensure that your son(s) / daughter(s) know their login details for their Microsoft account, including Microsoft Teams, as this is the platform commonly used by teachers for remote teaching purposes, in addition to SchoolWise, both of which can be accessed from the homepage of our school website: [www.presentationcollegecarlow.com](http://www.presentationcollegecarlow.com)

*Date: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022*