

Return to School- January 2022

January 5th 2022

Dear Parents,

I wish to bring the following information to your attention regarding return to school.

COVID-19 Symptoms

Children with any symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school. Children who are a close contact of a person who has COVID-19 should not be in school until the relevant isolation period is over. Any child who attends school and develops symptoms will be sent home immediately.

Please do not use an antigen test on your child if they are symptomatic. The antigen test will not give an accurate reading in this instance.

Please see the link below which you should read carefully to advise you further on the use on antigen testing.

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/antigen-tests-for-primary-school-children/>

Mask Wearing

Mask wearing is now required for all pupils in school from 3rd to 6th class. Only children who have received an exemption from the wearing of masks, should not be wearing them on return to school.

As I have previously stated mask wearing is not ideal, but it is a measure introduced to help keep everyone safer in school. I ask that parents of children in the relevant classes, ensure that a quality, correctly fitting mask is worn in school daily and cloth masks are washed regularly. Children will not be required to wear masks at breaktimes or during PE and lessons held outdoors. Children will also have mask breaks during the school day. Further information on mask wearing can be obtained here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a1e72-supporting-children-with-wearing-face-coverings-in-primary-schools/>

Staffing

Due to the very high levels of COVID-19 in the wider community, it is most likely at this point that there will be cases of the virus in our school. Transmission of the new Omicron variant will also now most likely take place in our classrooms despite ventilation and all the other measures we have introduced to date.

As a result, there will be issues regarding staff and their ability to attend school due to being a close contact or due to being a detected positive COVID case.

The Board of Management of the school will do everything it can to find substitute cover for all staff who cannot attend school. Given the shortage of substitute teachers currently in the system, it may be necessary over the coming weeks to send classes home and to support pupils through remote learning as there may not be staff available to teach them in school.

Rest assured the Board of Management will do everything it can to ensure that this does not happen but it would be remiss of the school not to inform parents in advance, that this unfortunate decision may have to be made by the Board of Management over the coming weeks. I hope this notice will allow parents to make temporary contingency arrangements in the event that children have to be sent home to engage in remote learning due to no substitute cover.

COVID-19 Vaccination

The Department of Education has been asked by the HSE to disseminate the information below to schools for onward communication to parents/guardians.

COVID-19 vaccine information for parents of children aged 5-11

The HSE has published detailed information and guidance for parents about COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5-11. This aims to help parents and guardians of 5-11 year old children make an informed decision when it's time for their child to be offered a COVID-19 vaccine.

Registration for the vaccine will open shortly, with priority being placed on children who are more at risk from COVID-19 or children who have a high-risk person in the family. Parents and guardians can read this information on <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/covid-19-vaccination-for-children/> or they can download these information booklets from HSE.ie.

[Important information for parents and guardians about the COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5-11 \(Comirnaty, Pfizer/BioNTech\) \(PDF, size 1.11 MB, 16 pages\)](#)

HEPA Filter Update

The Board of Management has worked over the Christmas holidays to further investigate HEPA filters. Unfortunately, there is a significant waiting time for good quality HEPA filters which would be required in classrooms of our size. Furthermore, the early payment of next years Minor Works grant to meet the cost of the filters will only cover a fraction of the cost. The Board of Management will do its utmost to ensure that filters are sourced as soon as possible and will try to have them in place as a matter of urgency.

Return to School

As we return to school after our Christmas break, we are faced with possibly our biggest challenge yet, in terms of trying to keep your children safe in school. All the staff will do their best to make sure that school will remain as normal as possible but unfortunately, we face a number of very difficult weeks ahead. I would ask all parents for their patience and understanding and hopefully once we work our way through this challenging period we will see better and brighter days ahead.

Le dea-ghuí,

Brian Flood
Principal