

Scoil Mhuire na nGrást,
Béal Guala,
Co. Chorcaí.



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Dear Parent/Guardian,

It is hoped that you had an enjoyable mid-term break with your families over the past few days.

Further to the recent government announcement, the school has received updated COVID-19 guidance from the Department of Education & Skills.

It is understood by the department that schools will need time in order to make adjustments and revisions to their schedules as efforts are made to resume normal school routines and teaching and learning activities. In this regard, this correspondence will highlight some initial areas of change.

Please note the following key changes which take effect from **Monday, 28 February**:

- It is no longer a requirement for staff or pupils to wear a face covering/mask in school. Staff and pupils can continue to wear a face covering/mask if they wish to do so on a personal basis.
- The wearing of face coverings/masks on school transport will no longer be mandatory but will continue to be advised.
- Critical components of the collective response in relation to COVID-19 continue to apply including self-isolation if symptomatic (even if fully vaccinated/boosted) or if having a positive COVID-19 test. Therefore, the requirement to stay at home if you have symptoms or if you test positive for COVID-19 remains – for pupils and staff alike.
- The HSE will continue with the current processes to support the provision of antigen testing for primary school pupils. The Antigen Free phone number is: 1800 110055 and parents may also order antigen tests online via www.hse.ie/schooltest . In this regard, just to note, the school roll number is 19672H.
- It is important to note that participation in the antigen testing programme is not mandatory and pupils who are well with no symptoms, in the class of the confirmed COVID-19 case, can continue to attend school.
- When the school receives notification from a parent/guardian of a child with a confirmed case of COVID-19, a notification will be sent to families of all pupils within the class. The requirement for physical distancing no longer applies and schools are no longer required to maintain class pods (see below), hence the slight change to notification.
- The necessity for Pods, and related physical distancing requirements, will no longer be required and, over the course of the next couple of weeks, classroom layout arrangements and organisation will begin to reflect same. Similarly, classes within a year group will gradually, over the next number of weeks, begin to play together in the yard during break-times.
- To prevent the spread of infection within the school, the continued use of good infection prevention and control measures such as hand washing, respiratory etiquette and ventilation will be maintained.

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All other existing arrangements will remain in place for the time being. As they are reviewed, and developments monitored, by the Board of Management, families will be advised accordingly in due course.

Please note that pupils should not attend school if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 infection and/or if they test positive for COVID-19.

In this regard, to assist with infection prevention and control measures in school - COVID-19 symptoms, testing, vaccination and self-isolation guidance is all available at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/>

Further helpful information in relation to isolation guidance for cases of COVID-19 may also be found on the *HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre* website at <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/newupdatedguidance/> . Updates are issued here on a regular basis as new public health advice emerges.

For all other isolation guidance queries, please contact the HSE on 1800 700 700 / 01 2408787 or your GP.

It is appreciated that the restrictions have presented challenges for pupils, parents/guardians and staff over the past two years. The supportive and encouraging response of the entire school community has been pivotal in ensuring the safe and sustainable provision of teaching and learning at Scoil Mhuire na nGrást during this time. In this regard, the school wishes to convey its appreciation to everyone for their collective endeavours, support and co-operation.

We look forward to welcoming everyone on their return tomorrow.

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Cathaoirleach, An Bhóird Bainistíochta



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