

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



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Re: Protocol in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school

Dear Parents and Staff

Further to previous correspondence, we wish to thank you for your vigilance, support and co-operation on all Covid-19 related matters since our return to school. It is hoped that the resumption of school activities has added to the pupils' sense of well-being during these times.

By way of additional information for school families and staff, the details below and overpage outline the procedures in the event of a confirmed case of COVID 19 in the school, so that everyone is aware of what happens.

Safety and Control Measures

The BoM, school leadership and staff are very conscious of the paramount need to keep all pupils, staff and visitors safe while in the school. The school is a controlled environment and, as outlined in previous correspondence in August and September, there are control measures in place to combat the introduction or spread of COVID-19. These are based on:

- Physical Distancing
- Hand Hygiene
- Enhanced hygiene facilities e.g. dispensers for hand sanitation, soap, paper hand-towels, tissue
- Respiratory and Hygiene Etiquette
- Arrival & Dismissal Protocols
- Designated Entrance/Exit locations
- Staggered lunch breaks
- Mask Wearing, where necessary
- Essential visitor protocols
- Enhanced cleaning regimes
- Related signage

When a person displays symptoms of COVID-19

The following steps are taken when a person (child or adult) in the school presents with suspected COVID-19 symptoms:

- That person is moved to the isolated area prior to going home. In the case of children their parents will be asked to come to the school, take them home and contact their GP for a free telephone consultation
- If the GP recommends that the person (child or adult) go for a COVID-19 test, that person is now considered a query case for COVID-19 and all of his/her household members must restrict their movements until the results of the test come back
- In the case of a negative result, the GP will advise when the person should return to school – usually after 48 hours.

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- In the case of a positive result, Public Health will, by law, be informed. This may take a matter of hours due to legal and volume of work issues. The risk has been removed from the school as the person who tested positive and his/her household are at home
- The person tested, or their parents, may well be informed before Public Health. In many cases a social media discussion ensues and anxiety levels are raised among the school community.

Public Health Intervention

The Public Health Department of the HSE is the agency responsible by law for dealing with positive cases of COVID-19:

- Once notified by the HSE testing regime, Public Health Doctors assume total control of the situation and will carry out a risk assessment. Based on questioning the person with the positive result, they will ascertain if they were within the school setting when they contracted the virus. If not, there may be no need to contact the school
- If the person was within the school setting when they contracted the virus, Public Health will contact the principal to carry out a Public Health Risk Assessment. This is a set of questions to see who might have been exposed to the virus and who needs to be excluded or tested. This risk assessment will be unique to each school
- The principal and BoM have no function in the risk assessment, other than to provide whatever information is required by the Public Health Medical Officer conducting the risk assessment
- The principal and BoM may be asked to assist the Medical Office by sending a message from them to the relevant families identified in the risk assessment. Public Health will not contact other members of the school community
- The principal and BoM are not permitted to inform members of the school community of the identity of the person or persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 for the following reasons:
 - Doctor – Patient confidentiality
 - GDPR legislation prevents the publication of personal data without consent

Regarding the above, the school will follow strictly the advice and instructions of the HSE. Pupil and staff confidentiality is essential at all times.

The above information is the most up to date information we have received, but may be subject to change going forward.

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Cathaoirleach, An Bhóird Bainistíochta



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