**Latest information from Department of Education (received Jan 5th 2022)**

Infection prevention and Control Measures:

1. Before attending school: Symptoms – Please make sure all staff and families are aware not to attend school if they have any symptoms of Covid-19 infection. Symptom profiles are available listen below and we advise parents to take a precautionary approach, particularly for children less able to articulate their symptoms, that if a child appears unwell, observe them at home and contact their GP as appropriate.
2. Close contacts - Please remind all staff and children that if they have been told by the HSE services that they are a close contact of a case of Covid-19, they need to adhere to the advice on the HSE website in relation to restricted movements and testing. Children under 13 years who are household close contacts must restrict their movements for 14 days and they are offered PCR testing at day 0 and day 10. On receipt of a day 10 not-detected PCR test result, they may exit restricted movements. It is important that anyone who has been identified as a close contact, is very aware of COVID-19 symptoms, and isolate and undergo testing should they develop any symptoms.
3. Re-enforcing general public health messages In addition to ensuring that staff and children do not attend school if they have any symptoms of Covid-19 infection, please ensure all staff and children are reminded of the importance of abiding by the national public health measures currently in place at all times e.g. vaccination (including boosters), social distancing, use of face masks, hand hygiene, ventilation and minimising social contacts.
4. What to do when a confirmed case of Covid-19 arises that is connected with the school: It is inevitable that cases of Covid-19 will arise in schools when they reopen, just as they are currently arising in the community. It is recommended that schools implement the infection prevention and control measures above. There are some key messages that you need to remember when cases arise: Classes do not need to be sent home or told not to come in to school. When multiple cases of Covid-19 arise in a class or school, those cases should be excluded and the children in the same pod as the case are offered antigen tests. If there is a second case outside the pod of the first case, all children and staff in the class are offered antigen tests. Those children and staff do not need to be excluded from school unless they develop symptoms or have a positive antigen test. Other than adhering to these actions in relation to Covid-19 cases, there is no Public Health reason that you need to exclude a whole class or to close a school. It is important to remember that the confirmed cases are no longer within the school and therefore the risk of onward transmission from those persons has been removed from the school setting. If the case was not in the school setting whilst infectious, then the school will not need to take any action because there is no significant risk that the case has spread the infection in the school setting. 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.`

**Symptoms of COVID-19**

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus) are:

* [fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/fever-adults/) - including having chills
* dry cough
* fatigue (tiredness)

COVID-19 symptoms can be like symptoms of [cold](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/common-cold/), [flu](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/) or [hay fever](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/hay-fever/).

Less common symptoms

Severe symptoms

You may not have all of the symptoms or your symptoms may be mild. Symptoms may vary for different age groups or different variants of the virus.

You can still get infected if you are fully vaccinated. But your symptoms may be mild.

It can take up to 14 days after you are infected for symptoms to show. You can spread COVID-19 during this time.