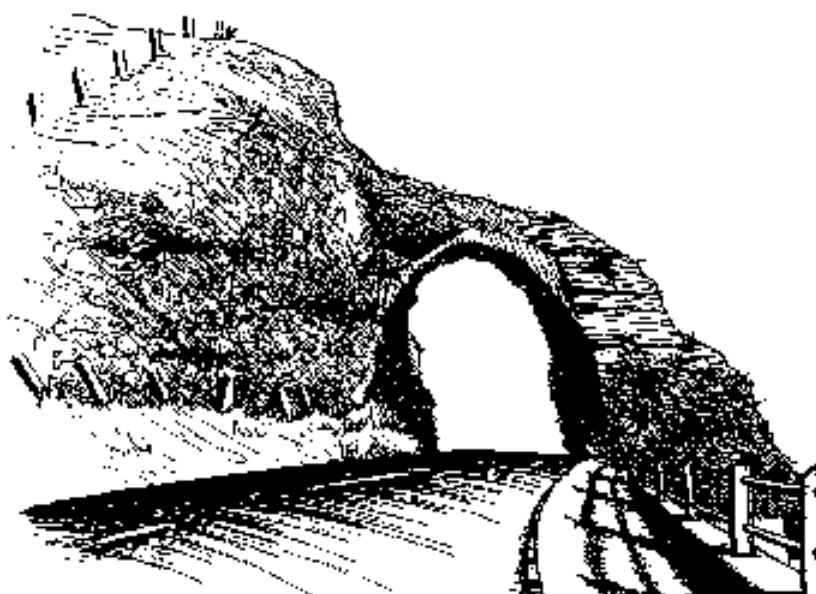


St. Patrick's Primary School, Glenariff



Covid-19 Information for Parents

September, 2021

Introduction

As the new school year begins, we are hopeful that our children can return to some form of normality. Our aim is to put in place appropriate mitigations against Covid-19, following the guidance, so that we can educate your child in school. However, our priority must be to ensure the safety of the wider school community. Therefore, it is important to recognise that we all have a role to play in limiting the spread of Covid-19.

Covid-19 Symptoms

It is important that children remain at home if they, or anyone in their household, are experiencing any of the following symptoms of Covid-19:

- A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature), or;
- A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual), or;
- Anosmia - the loss or a change in your normal sense of smell (it can also affect your sense of taste).

What if my child begins to show symptoms of Covid-19 whilst at school?

Children who are found to be unwell on arrival or become ill during the day **will be sent home immediately**.

If your child displays symptoms of COVID-19, they, and any members of their household within our school setting, will be sent home and advised to follow the PHA Guidance for households with a possible COVID-19 infection.

Whilst awaiting collection they will be protectively quarantined in a well-ventilated room with appropriate adult supervision.

Our school will keep a full record of such actions and request that a parent, carer, or guardian record their acknowledgement of this action.

Close Contacts

As of Friday 10th September, 2021, schools are now only asked to provide assistance in identifying close school contacts of confirmed COVID cases in very limited circumstances.

Instead, there will be a more targeted approach, in which the PHA contact tracing service will identify very closest contacts, for example very close friends, and ask them to isolate and get a test.

Other contacts in school, such as those in the same class or who sit near the case, will not routinely be asked to isolate and book a test. However, we have made the decision to inform parents of relevant cases in our school that we are aware of through a letter and/or a message through our school website. This will enable parents to make their own decisions regarding whether or not they would like to get their child tested. We would ask parents to inform our school if their child tests positive for Covid-19, so that we can communicate this effectively without naming individual children.

Our school will support parents, at this time, if you wish to be cautious and keep your children at home to monitor the situation, in order to protect the wider school community.

Please do not worry about your child's attendance grade, as the school will take this into account.

Also, all children isolating due to Covid-19, regardless of a test result, will be provided with learning material whilst out of school.

What if my child is a close contact?

Close contacts in P1 to P7 pupils who have had a positive PCR test in the previous 90 days and have no symptoms:

- Pupils who are close contacts but have already had a positive test result in the previous 90 days and have no new symptoms do not need to arrange a PCR test or self-isolate.

This is because it is possible for PCR tests to remain positive for some time after COVID-19 infection due to residual virus fragments (which are not infectious).

- If well they can remain at school. The school will inform parents if they were a close contact.

Close contacts who are pupils in any year from P1 to P7 who have not had a positive PCR test in the last 90 days and have no symptoms:

- Parents will be informed by the PHA that their child is a close contact of a confirmed case. The pupil will be advised to self-isolate until they have taken a PCR test.

- If the PCR test is positive the pupil should self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if they have no symptoms, for 10 days from the date of testing. Their household should also self-isolate unless they meet the exemptions set out on NI Direct.

- If the test is negative the pupil can return to school with advice to take another test on Day 8.

- The school would request that you forward a copy of the negative result on Day 2 and Day 8.

Results should be emailed to info@stpatricks.glenariff.ni.sch.uk

- If the child does go on to develop new symptoms, they should stay at home, self-isolate and book another PCR test.

Response to a Positive Case

You should continue to isolate until the result of the test is available.

If the result is positive you should continue to self-isolate for 10 full days after the symptoms started. You can end self-isolation 10 days after your symptoms started, as long as you do not still have a high temperature. If you still have a high temperature, you need to continue to self-isolate until your temperature has returned to normal for 48 hours.

You do not need to continue self-isolating for more than 10 days if you only have a cough or loss of sense of smell/ taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.

As we are all aware, guidance surrounding this pandemic changes frequently, so we would encourage parents to use the Public Health Agency website to ensure that you are up-to-date with the latest guidance.

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>

School Mitigations Against Covid-19

Our school has put in place a number of mitigations to limit the spread of Covid-19, which include:

- Social distancing/the continued use of 'bubbles';
- The promotion of personal hand and respiratory hygiene measures;
- Asymptomatic LFD testing encouraged for all staff twice weekly;
- The use of ventilation maximised as far as practicable;
- The use of masks/visors where there is close contact;
- The use of the outdoor environment when the weather is conducive;
- One way systems in areas of high congestion;
- Limited visitors to the school premises;
- All high contact touch areas around the school are cleaned regularly throughout the day e.g. door handles.

Arrival at School

Children should line up at their designated positions on the tarmac or paved area.

Each class/bubble uses their designated entry point.

On arrival children's temperatures are checked and their hands sanitised or washed.

Windows and doors will remain open as appropriate.

Each child will have their own seat/desk assigned to them.

Parents are asked to drop children off outside the school gates to limit the number of adults on the school premises with the exception of foundation stage parents who may accompany their child to the entrance to the canopy area. We would ask that you stay off the paved area where possible when waiting for your child to enter the school.

Arrangements can be made with the school by any parents who wish to accompany their child to the school building due to exceptional circumstances/additional needs.

Any parents who are on the school premises are asked to wear a mask.

A one-way system is in operation to avoid parents meeting and help adhere to social distancing – this involves entering through the gate closest to Bayview and exiting through the gate closest to the village.

During the School Day

Children who require assistance due to first aid/intimate care will be supported by an adult who will wear appropriate PPE and wash hands before and after close contact.

Regular hand washing/sanitising will take place throughout the school day.

Despite relaxation of 'bubbles' our school will continue as much as practicable to maintain bubbles for now.

Where possible, one-way systems will be in place when moving around the school.

Lunchtime

- There are two lunchtime sittings so the number of children eating at any one time in the space is reduced.

- Table numbers are limited to six per table.

- As much as possible children will remain seated for the duration of lunchtime while in the hall.

- Ventilation will be maximised when appropriate.

- Children will be assigned different areas to eat and play.

- Supervisors wear masks.

Leaving School

Parents are asked to collect children from outside the school gates to limit the number of adults on the school premises with the exception of foundation stage parents who may collect their child from the entrance to the canopy area.

Teachers will escort children in Key Stages 1 & 2 to the school gates, using the exit closest to the village.

Public Transport

Children showing any symptoms of Covid-19 should not travel to school.

Children should clean their hands before boarding any home to school transport vehicle.

It is strongly recommended that all pupils regardless of age, should wear a face covering on all buses or taxis for the journey between home and school where it is appropriate for them to do so and they are able to handle them as directed.

Children who have been in contact with someone that has developed symptoms whilst at school or on home to school transport do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange to be tested) a member of their household develops symptoms or they have been advised to self-isolate by PHA.

Should a pupil test positive they will be asked about their journey to school. Any close contacts identified on home to school transport will be notified.

Remote/Blended Learning

There is the distinct possibility that at some stage throughout the year, children may have to learn from home.

Due to the nature of the pandemic and the requirement to follow guidance provided by the Public Health Agency, our school or a class 'bubble' may need to close at short notice.

Our school will make every reasonable effort to provide resources for your child so that their learning can continue while out of school.

We will continue to use a variety of online resources to provide learning for your child, which may include:

Seesaw, Microsoft Teams, our school website, Accelerated Reader and Mathletics.

On the next page, please find a flow map for close contacts.

Home/School Communication

Please update your contact details. This will include telephone numbers (home, work, mobile), e-mail addresses and a list of people who can collect your children.

It is very important that this information is up to date in order to collect children from school who may be displaying Covid-19 symptoms and to avoid the risk of potentially spreading the virus.

School Meals

Our school will make food provision available for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who are unable to attend school due to Covid-19 restrictions and who wish to avail of such provision.

Additionally, the same food provision at the standard cost will be made available to those pupils who ordinarily pay for their school meals but are again isolating due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Our school will continue to review procedures in light of new guidance.

We appreciate your ongoing support during this challenging time.

Flowchart for PARENTS based on NI Direct website guidance

Only use for pupils in a school setting 03/09/2021

