



Scoil Sheosaimh Naofa

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September 27th ,2021

Dear parent(s)/ guardian(s),

As you may be aware there are changes coming to COVID 19 testing and contact tracing for children attending primary school. We have received communication from the Department outlining the changes for school settings and these documents are attached for your information, please read them carefully.

Some important information to note is outlined below:

- From today, automatic contact tracing of asymptomatic close contacts in children aged over 3 months and less than 13 years, in primary education is no longer recommended. This means that if we become aware of a case of COVID 19 who has recently attended school, we do not need to contact the HSE, and we will not be routinely contacted by the HSE.
- This means that children aged between 3 months and 13 years who are identified as a close contact in education settings, social and sporting groups, or other non-household settings and who are **asymptomatic** will no longer be routinely required to restrict their movements.
- Automatic COVID 19 testing of **asymptomatic** close contacts identified in education settings, social and sporting groups will no longer take place; instead testing will focus on clinically relevant symptomatic disease.
- Cases and outbreaks in **special educational needs settings (including ASD Special Class setting)** will still have a public health risk assessment, which may still require children to be identified as close contacts, be referred for testing and have their movements restricted. However they will generally be requested only to restrict their movements for five days, and be referred for one COVID 19 test.
- Children aged between 3 months and 13 years who are identified, as **household close contacts** and are not fully vaccinated or have had a confirmed Covid-19 diagnosis in the last 9 months (even if they have no symptoms) will still need to restrict their movements and get a COVID 19 test. A child is a household contact if they were present over-night, in the household of a COVID 19 case while the case was infectious. This may be in their own home or someone else's home for example children who may have been on sleepovers with family or friends.
- **Public Health advice remains the same for any child between 3 months and 13 years of age with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 - they should immediately self-isolate, should not attend childcare or school or socialise and follow current public health advice. Close observation of children for symptoms which are consistent with COVID 19 is recommended at all times.**

All infection prevention and control measures, including pods and other mitigation measures will remain in

place in school but in light of these changes to contact tracing, **it is more important than ever for pupils who are displaying symptoms of Covid-19 to remain at home and to follow the public health guidelines.** Please see attached updated isolation quick guide for parents and guardians of children older than 3 months and up to 13 years of age as of Sept 23rd.

Another important change to note is that if the school becomes aware of a confirmed case of Covid-19, Public Health do not recommend that schools inform parents of other children that there has been a case of Covid-19 within the class/school as standard. In line with GDPR requirements we cannot inform parents unless instructed to do so by public health. In this case the school will follow the guidelines as detailed below.

“If you are aware that someone 3 months to 13 years, or a child attending primary school has recently tested positive for Covid-19, you do not now need to take any specific actions, with regard to discussing with HSE / Public Health.

You should ensure that, as always,

- *You are vigilant to anyone developing new symptoms or unwell within your facility with symptoms of Covid-19 and isolate them as normal until a parent can safely collect them.*
- *That all your recommended infection prevention control and mitigation measures e.g. pods, physical distancing where appropriate, face-covering use where required, ventilation, hand hygiene, encouragement of respiratory etiquette etc are all in place*
- *Following the specific PH guidance for your school, facility, activity with regard to e.g. singing, music etc.”*

Any further changes will be communicated to parents and thank you all again for your continued support.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Niall Spain and staff