

The HSE have requested us to;

1. Remind all parents/guardians, staff and students to keep an eye on their health and to check for symptoms of COVID-19.

Symptoms of Covid-19 can include some or all of the following;

- fever (temperature of 38°C or higher), cough, shortness of breath, any loss or change to the senses of smell or taste, headache, sore throat, or a runny nose.

If any student or member of staff develops these symptoms they must self-isolate (stay at home) (isolate from others) even if vaccinated and contact their GP for advice regarding a COVID-19 test.

Isolating from others means they should stay in a room, on their own, with a window open for ventilation. They should avoid contact with other people.

2. All public health guidelines still need to be followed to protect the health of our school community, these include:

- ✓ Wearing face coverings
- ✓ Cleaning & Sanitising hands regularly
- ✓ Maintaining physical distance from others
- ✓ Being mindful of the ventilation of classrooms by opening windows and doors as appropriate

3. Encourage all those who are eligible for vaccination within our school community to access appropriate information around this (available at <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/>) for those wishing to arrange vaccination, they can do so at either:

- a. Register using the HSE Vaccine portal (<https://vaccine.hse.ie/#register>)
- b. **OR** phone the HSE at 1800 700 700

What is the advice for Close Contacts who are fully-vaccinated against COVID-19?

Students/Staff attend school until they/their parents/guardians receive a text message from the HSE to indicate that they are Close Contacts.

Close contacts who are fully-vaccinated against COVID-19 are required to restrict their movements (stay at home) until they receive a call from the HSE Contact Management Programme. During this call a review of each close contact's vaccination (dates and type) and medical history will determine whether the vaccine is likely to provide "significant immunity" for them. **The close contact will then be advised whether they can return to school or whether they need to continue to restrict movements.** If a Close Contact develops symptoms, they need to isolate from others and seek a Covid19 test.

When is a person considered to be fully-vaccinated?

- a. 7 days after receipt of the second Pfizer-BioNTech dose (two dose vaccination course)
- b. 15 days after receipt of the second AstraZeneca dose (two dose vaccination course)

What is the advice for close contacts who are not fully-vaccinated against COVID-19?

- Close contacts who are not fully-vaccinated will need to go for two PCR tests for COVID-19, one as soon as possible and one on Day 10 after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case.
- They will need to restrict their movements (stay at home) until the Day 10 test has been done. This includes not attending work or school.
- If the Day 10 test result is "not detected" or negative, the pupil or staff member can return to school provided they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

What about the families of those who are close contacts?

Other people who live at home with the close contact do not need to restrict their movements, provided the close contact has no Covid symptoms. This means they can continue to attend school, work etc. If the close contact tests positive for COVID-19, the household will then need to restrict their movements.

What if a close contact declines the COVID-19 test?

Testing is not mandatory. But if a close contact does not have a Day 10 test done, this means they need to continue to restrict their movements for 14 days after their last contact with the person with COVID-19.

More information

Up to date information and advice on COVID-19 is available on [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie).
We thank you for your help and support as we continue to live with COVID-19.

Best wishes,
*The HSE COVID-19 Health Protection Schools Response
(Part of HSE's National COVID-19 Contact Management Programme)*