**Covid-19 and Reopening Scoil Mhuire**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**After-School Study**

Study will take place this year. Priority will be given to the following groups in order: 6th Year, 3rd Year with remaining places allocated on a first come first served basis to all other students. Study takes place 4.15-6.00 Monday-Thursday and 1.45-3.30 on Fridays. Study will take place in the Study Hall. Students will not be permitted to return to classrooms after Study (rooms will have been sanitised earlier) and must leave the school by one designated door only to reduce the workload on the cleaning staff who will have dramatically increased responsibilities this year.

**Absence**

**If my daughter is out sick, will she be able to log in to online classes?**

No. Current advice is that there are child protection and data protection concerns if a teacher livestreams from a classroom where other students are present. If a student is absent, arrangements will be made to send work home. In the event of a total school closure, teachers will be permitted to stream classes to all students who will be at home.

**Behaviour**

All students are required to follow the school Code of Positive Behaviour. In particular, students are required to abide by all procedures, directions and protocols designed to prevent the spread of infection. Refusal to do so will be regarded as a serious breach of school rules and subject to appropriate sanctions.

**Break time and Lunchtime**

**Where will students eat during break from classes?**

Students will remain in their classrooms. Base classrooms for year groups are being operated to maintain physical distancing and separation within the building. The General Purpose Area **will not** be available for breaks.

**Computer Classes**

Students using computers will be required to wipe down the keyboard, mouse, desk and chair with a sanitising wipe before leaving the room.

**Daily Cleaning**

Students and staff will be required to clean their own desk, chair and work area each day. Supplies of cleaning spray and paper towels will be provided in every room.

**Disposal of Litter**

Students will be asked to take their own packaging and rubbish home each day. Pedal bins will be available in every room for the disposal of masks, tissues, wipes etc. Students should not touch the bins with their hands at any time. The caretaking staff will remove bins each day for disposal.

**Drinking Water**

**Will the water rooms be available in the school?**

No – All schools have been directed by the Department of Education & Skills to remove the drinking water supply within school buildings. Student should bring a filled water bottle to school each day.

**Face Coverings/Masks**

**Does my daughter have to wear a mask?**

Following the Minister’s announcement on 07 August 2020, **all students must wear a mask in school.** Masks should be **reusable** and should be washed every day. Tuition on the correct use of a mask will be provided upon return to school and posters/signage will be in every classroom.

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

It is therefore recommended that teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

In certain situations, the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

All students on the post primary transport scheme will be required to wear face coverings unless there is a good reason not to do so.

Government guidance on how to properly use a mask is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/#how-to-use-a-cloth-face-covering-properly>

All staff and students wearing face coverings are reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.

Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

**What is the purpose of a person’s wearing a mask?**

The purpose is not to protect themselves but to reduce onward transmission and the benefit is reliant on ensuring the mask is worn appropriately

Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

* has trouble breathing
* is unconscious or incapacitated
* is unable to remove it without help
* has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

**Where will students store their masks?**

Face coverings should be stored in a space designated for each student that is separate from others when not being worn (e.g., in individually labelled containers or bags – a plastic zip lock bag is sufficient).

**Does a teacher have to enforce the wearing of masks by students?**

It is not an individual teacher’s responsibility to enforce mask use by pupils. However, school management may refuse entry to school if a student refuses to wear a face covering as directed by the Minister for Education & Skills and in line with current public health advice.

**Feeling Unwell**

**My daughter is not feeling well. Should I send her to school?**

**NO.** No person (child, teacher or parent) should attend an educational setting if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 i.e. if the child has symptoms of a viral respiratory infection or if there is someone in the household suspected or known to have COVID-19.

**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to symptoms of cold or flu. The most common symptoms are fever, cough, shortness of breath and loss of sense of smell or taste. More information regarding the most up to date signs and symptoms of COVID 19 are available on [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) .

**I am working in Scoil Mhuire. I think I may have symptoms – what should I do?**

**Do not** attend work. Inform school, phone your doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.

**If I have had contact with a person with COVID-19 what should I do?**

Staff members or students should not present for work or school if they have been identified by HSE as a Contact of a person with COVID-19 and should follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.

**If I become unwell at work/school, what should I do?**

Staff members that develop symptoms at work should bring this to the attention of the Principal/Deputy Principal promptly and should follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.

Students should bring this to the attention of their teacher or if on break, come immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal and follow HSE guidance thereafter.

An Isolation Area will be available in the school building for any person who is awaiting collection.

**Can the school refuse to admit my child?**

Parents are advised that the school reserves the right to decline entry to pupils who appear to have fever or respiratory tract infection.

Note: On-site temperature taking is not recommended because fever is not a consistent symptom of COVID-19 in children and would result in delayed school entry. Educational settings do not need to take children’s temperatures every morning.

**Gloves**

**Should my daughter wear gloves in school?**

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or teachers is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. Washing or use of hand sanitiser on gloved hands is not appropriate.

**Hand Sanitiser**

**Is the use of hand sanitiser mandatory?**

Yes - Everyone entering the school building will be required to sanitise their hands at the entry point. Regular handwashing with soap and water will be necessary during the school day. Sanitising points will also be available throughout the school building, in every classroom, outside the staffroom, at each office and in the isolation area.

**When should hands be sanitised?**

Staff and students should perform hand hygiene:

* 1. On arrival at school;
  2. Before eating or drinking;
  3. After using the toilet;
  4. After petting animals;
  5. After playing outdoors;
  6. When their hands are physically dirty;
  7. When they cough or sneeze.
  8. When they move to another classroom.

**Information**

**Where can I get information on returning to school?**

The Roadmap for Reopening Schools is available at [www.gov.ie/backtoschool](http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool) .

**Lockers**

**Will students have access to lockers?**

No – Students will need to bring books to school on a daily basis but will have a base classroom in which to keep their books. A wheelie school bag should be considered. Students will be advised on how to minimise bringing heavy books to school during induction.

**Managing Movement in the School Building**

**What door should my daughter use to enter and exit the building?**

The following doors have been designated for use by specific groups only:

Staff members: Enter and Exit Main Entrance Door on Junior or Senior side of school.

First Years: Enter Junior Cloakroom Door and proceed directly to Base Classrooms. Exit through same door.

Second Years: Enter Junior Cloakroom Door and proceed directly to Base Classrooms. Exit Base Classroom door 6, 8 or 9 as appropriate.

Third Years: Enter Senior Cloakroom Door and proceed directly to Base Classrooms. Exit Base Classroom door 27, 28 or 29 as appropriate.

Fourth Years: Enter Senior Cloakroom Door and proceed directly to Base Classrooms. Exit through Double Doors in Senior GPA.

Fifth Years: Enter Junior Cloakroom Door and proceed directly to Base Classrooms. Exit through Main Entrance on Junior side.

Sixth Years: Enter Senior Cloakroom Door and proceed directly to Base Classrooms. Exit through Double Doors in Senior GPA.

Note: Students from the same family in different year groups must use their designated entrance/exit only.

**Physical Education (PE) classes**

**Will students have PE class?**

Yes. Additional protocols will be in place regarding the use of shared equipment, sanitising measures etc.

**Subjects in Scoil Mhuire and Edmund Rice Secondary School**

Students travelling between the schools for subjects at Senior Cycle will be expected the follow the procedures and protocols in each school regarding:

1. Entry & exit from the school
2. Procedures if feeling unwell
3. Procedures for visiting the bathroom
4. Observing traffic management systems
5. Maintaining physical distance and separation from others
6. Wearing a face covering.

There will be an induction for all students travelling between the two schools for subjects at Senior Cycle.

**Travel Abroad**

Any students who travel abroad are required to follow the protocols laid down by Government i.e. quarantine for 14 days before presenting at school. International students will follow this protocol - agencies are responsible for the quarantining arrangements.

**Uniform**

**Do students have to wear school uniform?**

Yes – uniform rules remain unchanged. Students are reminded to keep their uniform in a clean and tidy condition.

**Visiting the School**

**Can I visit the school during the day e.g. if my daughter forgets something?**

Parents are asked to make **only essential visits** to the school. An appointment must be made with the Principal/Deputy Principal prior to visiting the school – drop-ins will not be possible. Parents will be asked to remain in the car park and to telephone the school office to gain entry.