



25th February 2021

'Phase 2 Reopening of schools'.

The Framework is an interim arrangement as the Department and the education partners work together to ensure post-primary schools can fully reopen in line with public health advice at the earliest opportunity.

The framework sets out three broad areas intended to support planning and clarify certain issues that have arisen since schools closed in late December.

Those areas are:

1. *Public health supports, messaging and risk mitigation measures in the classroom and in schools*
2. *An interim model for special classes in post-primary schools (phase 1- from 22 February 2021) and in-school provision for Leaving Certificate students (phase 2 from 1 March 2021) including flexible provisions for management, staff, and students*
3. *The sequencing and timeframe for re-opening*

Phase 2

This phase, announced by government on 23rd February, sets out the arrangements for the return of students currently:

- ✓ **6th year – Monday 1st March 2021**
- ✓ **5th year – Monday 15th March 2021**
- ✓ **All other year groups – Monday 12th April 2021**

Some key points

- It is important to note that a **very high-risk student is one with an underlying medical condition that makes him/her extremely vulnerable from contracting COVID-19. Schools must be provided with a letter from a medical professional stating that the student falls into that category.** The arrangements in this guidance apply to those students only. All other students are expected to return to school.
- Parents of students returning to school will be asked to complete a **declaration form**. The Department states that this form is to be used when students are returning to school after any absence. Students over 18 years may, if they choose, complete the document in respect of themselves. This will be sent online as a Microsoft forms
- Timetable will stay as is – **normal timetable** whether in-school or online learning for the duration of the reopening phases.
- **Online learning will continue as is following the guidelines** we have introduced for the remainder of partial reopening
- **Downtime/catch up class periods will be introduced for all year groups** – except for 6th & 5th years when they are back in the building
- There should be **no congregation outside schools** during this interim phase. Requests to engage with staff should be made through the school and will be provided by telephone or online.
- Importance of **keeping COVID-19 out of education facilities by keeping symptomatic children at home**. Parents should err on the side of caution in this respect and follow the school's sickness policy of if sick in any way, stay at home



PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL

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- **Staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:**
 - if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
 - staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school
- Ovendoor will be available at lunch time until the Easter break for 5th year & 6th year, it will return to full service i.e. breaktime and lunchtime from the 12th April

The Government website has been updated www.gov.ie/backtoschool with new materials for parents and for students.

These are designed to be age-appropriate and have been developed in consultation with children and young people and parents.

The Minister has asked the important information from the Department and the HSE with regard to returning to school is shared with all parents. Links to each of these are below:

- **Video for parents with key information on supporting children to return to school** available [here](#) and [here](#)
- **Fliers for parents** –are also available for download [here](#). The HSE has prepared material on recognising symptoms, which complements the material from the Department on returning to school. This is available [here](#) Much of this is summarised in the parent and student presentation but should be read also,
- Age-appropriate videos for children and young people at different stages. **Videos for post-primary students** are available [here](#)
- **Resources in a wide range of languages**. Many schools will enjoy a huge diversity among their student and parent community. To support these parents, we have translated guidance for parents at gov.ie/backtoschool

The Covid-19 World Service project has also consulted with the Department and has used our key messages to produce a range of **videos in a variety of languages** which your school community may find helpful – please see more at

<https://nascireland.org/covid-19-world-service>

The **key message is that where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 amongst school staff or pupils, schools will be required to follow the public health instruction of the HSE Public Health.**

If you have concerns with regard to your re-opening plans, I encourage you to contact the school.

We look forward to welcoming some of our students and staff back after the Mid-Term break and in the weeks after.

William Ryan



Support for post-primary students



Advice for your return to in-person learning

To ensure **your safety**, follow the rules and routines put in place by your school. These include:

- Social distancing
- Washing your hands regularly with hand sanitiser
- Wearing a face covering where a two metre distance cannot be maintained.

Be sure to **play your part** and contribute to discussions. Remember, your opinions matter. Support your classmates, they may be glad of a listening ear.

When on **school transport**, sit in your assigned seat and wear a face covering when waiting for and when on board the bus.



You may feel that you have **missed out on learning**. Don't worry, the Department of Education and your teachers will support you, especially if you are an exam year student.

If you have **COVID-19 symptoms**, you should not attend school. While at school, if you develop symptoms, you should tell your teacher immediately. See [here](#) for more information.

There is always **someone to help** if you feel anxious. If you have any worries, you can reach out to your tutor, year head, guidance counsellor or a trusted adult.





COVID-19 Advice for parents



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Symptoms to look out for and when to contact your GP

Schools are back and the winter season is ahead of us. Every year, schoolchildren get colds, flu and other infections. This time, coronavirus (COVID-19) is with us.

Here is a guide on what symptoms to look out for and what to do if your child is unwell.

When to keep your child at home and phone your GP

Do not send your child to school or childcare if any of the following is true.

Your child has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- any other common symptoms of coronavirus such as a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
- been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus

You will need to:

1. Isolate your child. This means keeping them at home and completely avoiding contact with other people, as much as possible. Your child should only leave your home to have a test or to see your GP.
2. Phone your GP. They will advise you if your child needs a coronavirus test.
3. Everyone that your child lives with should also restrict their movements, at least until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.
4. Treat your child at home for their symptoms.

When it's okay to send your child to school or childcare

It's usually okay to send your child to school or childcare if they:

- only have nasal symptoms, such as a runny nose or a sneeze
- do not have a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more (as long as their temperature has not been lowered by taking any form of paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- do not have a cough
- have not been in close contact with anyone who has coronavirus
- do not live with anyone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
- have been told by a GP that their illness is caused by something else, that is not coronavirus. Your GP will tell you when they can return to school or childcare
- have got a negative ('not detected') coronavirus test result and have not had symptoms for 48 hours

Most of the time, you do not need to phone your GP if a runny nose or sneezing are your child's only symptoms. Talk to your pharmacist instead.



Preventing the spread of illness

Help children to understand and to follow this advice:



Wash their hands
regularly



Use tissues or
elbows to cover
their coughs and
sneezes



Keep their
distance from
people who
are sneezing or
coughing



Don't share
toys



Don't share food
at lunch or other
times

More information

Go to [hse.ie/coronavirus](https://www.hse.ie/coronavirus) for more information. This includes advice on the following:

- protecting your child from coronavirus
- if your child has symptoms of coronavirus
- getting urgent medical advice if your child is very unwell
- children with underlying health conditions
- explaining coronavirus to your child
- how your child should wash their hands
- caring for a child isolating and self-isolation
- treating coronavirus symptoms at home
- bringing your child to a test centre and test results