



Updated Covid-19 Guidance to Schools following the mid-term break 2022

The Government has accepted the recommendations of NPHET to remove remaining restrictions relating to mask-wearing and physical distancing in schools. Schools should now resume normal school routines and normal teaching and learning activities.

If members of staff or students wish to continue wearing face masks or coverings, they may do so.

Continued use of good infection prevention and control measures such as hand washing, respiratory hygiene, and ventilation is advised.

Critical components of the collective response in relation to COVID-19 continue to apply including self-isolation if symptomatic (even if fully vaccinated/boosted) or if having a positive COVID-19 test.

In general, schools should now resume normal school routines and normal teaching and learning activities.

Some main changes and updates below:

Introducing these revised measures

- Apart from the measures affecting teaching and learning, schools have discretion at local level to determine the timescale for introducing the changes outlined.
- It is not envisaged that timetables would be changed mid-year or work undertaken during the mid-term break.

Staying at home if you have symptoms

- The requirement to stay at home if you have symptoms remains – for students and staff alike.
- One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school.
- If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread.



Hand Hygiene

- Schools should continue to promote good hygiene.
- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
- Funding will continue to issue to schools for the purchase of PPE, including hand sanitiser.

Face coverings/mask wearing

- It is no longer a requirement for staff or pupils/students to wear a face covering/mask in school.
- Staff and student/pupils can continue to wear a face covering/mask if they wish to do so on a personal basis and schools should continue to make masks available on request as they are currently doing.
- Funding to support the purchase of PPE, including masks, will continue to be made available to schools.

School transport and Face coverings/mask wearing

- With effect from Monday 28 February the wearing of face coverings/masks on school transport will no longer be mandatory but will continue to be advised.
- All other measures relating to hygiene (including the provision of hand sanitiser and additional cleaning of services) and pre-assigned seating will remain in place subject to further review.

Cleaning and Hygiene in schools

- The Department of Education has provided additional funding to schools to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19.
- This funding will continue for this academic year and will be reviewed in advance of the start of the next school year.



Physical Distancing

- As the general requirement for physical distancing in society no longer applies, schools are no longer required to maintain these arrangements.
- Where these arrangements are impacting negatively on teaching and learning such as live streaming or restricting team teaching etc. they should cease immediately.
- It is not envisaged that timetables would be rearranged mid-year
- Use of changing rooms, PE halls and lockers, staff rooms etc. can resume where there has been limited access in this regard.

Visitors to schools/Parent teacher meetings

- There is no longer a requirement to restrict visitors to schools and schools should revert to the normal arrangements for visitors.
- In this context parent teacher meetings should resume and schools where parent teacher meetings have not taken place should commence these as soon as possible.
- All schools should ensure that they have a parent teacher meeting for each year group within this academic year (where these have not already taken place).

Return to Work Form/ return to schools form

- Schools no longer need to request staff or pupils/students to complete a Return to Work form or a Return to School form after school holidays/breaks.