

# Advice for parents during COVID-19: Returning to Primary and Post-Primary Special Classes



School communities are working hard, with the support of public health officials, to ensure the safe operation of our schools for students, staff and families.

All schools have put in place rules and routines which must be followed to keep everyone safe. The latest public health advice on returning to school is available on [gov.ie/schools](http://gov.ie/schools).



**If your child has any of the following symptoms of Covid-19, do not send them to school and contact your GP:**

- A temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- Any other common symptoms of Covid-19 – a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath or an existing breathing condition that has become worse
- Been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19
- Been living with someone who is unwell and may have Covid-19
- Other uncommon symptoms of Covid-19, such as sore throat, headaches or diarrhoea
- Returned from another country in the last 14 days.



See [here](#) for more.

**Close Contacts:** if a student or staff member in a school tests positive for Covid-19, they must self-isolate and Public Health will conduct a risk assessment. Anyone who is deemed a close contact must restrict their movements and not attend school. HSE guide for parents [here](#).

## Example: Close contact must restrict movements

- Teresa O'Brien is in a special class in St Mary's school
- A child in her class has tested positive for Covid-19
- Following a public health risk assessment, Teresa has been identified as a close contact
- Teresa's parents are informed that she should restrict her movement for 14 days since the day she was last in touch with the child who tested positive.



## Example: Contact of a contact is not required to restrict movements

- Peter O'Brien is in another special class in St Mary's school. He is Teresa's brother
- He has not been identified by Public Health as a close contact of the child who tested positive
- Peter can continue to attend his special class
- If Teresa or anyone else in the household tests positive then Peter must stay at home.



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- **Good handwashing and hygiene practice** – important for all students. It's important that students' hands are washed regularly. Where possible students should be taught to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue which must be binned immediately.

- Children are returning to primary and post-primary special classes for in-person learning on 22 February.



- Staff members will wear appropriate **personal protective equipment (PPE)** when they cannot keep 2 metres apart from others. They will also wear other PPE such as **gloves** or **aprons** when they are providing close or intimate care for children.

- Schools have been provided with the funding to supply this PPE for staff members.



- **School transport** – students have an assigned seat that they must sit in. School buses are moving to operate at 50% capacity and further progress will be made on this in the coming weeks.

- **Pick up** and **drop off** can be a busy time.



- Please ensure social distancing by following the school's guidance on when and where to go. Please drop and collect your child quickly without lingering.
- Parents should follow public health advice on socialising outside of the household to keep their children safe outside of school.

For video guidance from Public Health specialist Dr Abigail Collins, click [here](#).