**Covid-19 Guidance for Parents**

Please note the following procedures regarding possible COVID-related absences from school.

**Illness**

In the event of a student felling unwell with e.g. a cold, or staying at home pending a family member being tested for coronavirus – these will be considered short term absences. Students are advised to use their text books and resources already provided by teachers to work on topics they were covering in classes, as would be the case for normal casual illnesses any year. They will get any other notes they missed on return to school.

**Covid Symptoms / Positive Result**

In the event of a student developing symptoms of COVID-19, a test should be arranged. Symptoms include: a high temperature/ fever or a new continuous cough, or a change in taste / smell. Please do not send your son / daughter to school if they have any of these symptoms. If a student exhibits any of these symptoms in school, we will ask that they are collected, with their siblings, until a test is completed.

If a student does test positive or has symptoms of COVID, they must isolate for a full ten days from the day their symptoms began. The family of that household must also stay at home for a full fourteen days. If during the fourteen days, another family member of the same household becomes symptomatic, they must stay at home for a further ten days from the day the symptoms began.

Where a student or member of staff tests positive, or the Public Health Agency have advised that we must treat a case as positive, the school will act in the following way:

* Mrs McCarry will contact the family of the student to identify those s/he has sat beside within a two metre distance, for longer than fifteen minutes during the school day – lessons, break and lunch.
* Staff will be contacted to identify close contacts according to their seating plans.
* Please note, tracing must be completed to 48 hours before the positive case began symptoms. For example – if a student becomes symptomatic on a Friday, tracing will have to go back to all classes / areas in the school attended from Wednesday. If, however, a student begins symptoms on a Monday, we will get advice from the PHA, but it is unlikely, we will have to trace back, as 48 hours would bring the time scale back to Saturday; so no pupils are in school.
* If a student at the school tests positive over a weekend, please inform Ms Toner on the school mobile: 07869544772, so that we can begin to conduct tracing of close contacts as soon as possible. This is an emergency mobile only in the event of a positive result, when school is closed.
* The Public Health Agency need to be notified of positive test results by us, as they will proceed with any further tracing outside of school – e.g. buses.
* Mrs McCarry will collate the list of close contacts. Depending on the numbers of students impacted, school will then notify those identified as close contacts, either by text message or a telephone call. If we are notified over the weekend, text messaging will be used. If you do not get communication from school, please consider that as confirmation that your son / daughter has not been a close contact.
* The school will be following the Public Health Agency guidelines strictly. This will mean that anyone identified as a close contact will be asked to self-isolate for a full fourteen days, from the date they were in last contact with the positive case. (It can take up to fourteen days for possible symptoms to occur, so this is a precaution).
* School will operate as normal for all other students, including siblings of the student self-isolating, as long as the close contact and they themselves do not get symptoms. If they do get symptoms, they must get a test, and the family should isolate together at that point, until they get clarity of a negative result. If positive, the whole family must then isolate as per Public Health Agency guidelines, and notify the school.

For students who have tested positive (if well enough) and those instructed to self-isolate, classwork will commence through google classroom. In these cases, students will be absent from between ten to fourteen days or more. Students should treat Monday to Friday as normal school days. We advise they take time for physical exercise as would be provided in PE classes.

Please contact the school office on 02870343611:

* if your son / daughter has not signed on to our school network
* if they have not taken note of google classroom codes

**Google Classroom**

(Please see separate Google Classroom Guide)

 Teachers will assign material on google classroom, and this will have a variety of formats depending on subjects. Units of work will be uploaded and guidance given as to what to do.

Please advise your son / daughter to check both the stream and classwork material. They should have their textbooks at home, and depending on subjects, hard copies of booklets / units of work. It is important that they keep up with the work set, and should also be encouraged to independently research topics they had been covering in class as well. We encourage them to use initiative in learning; for example:

* complete mind-maps to revise content covered from the beginning of September, in preparation for mid-term assessments;
* build literacy skills by reading around topics in each subject;
* build on numeracy skills through practice questions;
* refer to examination websites for past paper questions;
* use time to get ahead in coursework / portfolio based subjects
* revise subject content covered to date

Please advise your son / daughter that if they come across any material they find very difficult in a subject, take a note of the questions they would like to ask, and bring that to the subject teachers on return to school.

**Safety in School:**

The most effective way of trying to prevent the spread of infection is if everyone takes responsibility for personal hygiene - washing their hands and sanitising.

It has been recommended that face coverings in corridors and other communal areas should be worn by staff and students in post primary settings. We request therefore that our students wear navy or black face coverings, and ask for the support of parents / guardians in encouraging students to wear these to help everyone in our school community feel safe. It is advised face coverings should be worn -

* on public transport coming in and going home from school
* on the corridors when they move to new classrooms
* enclosed spaces - e.g. locker areas
* at assembly

Students who have been shielding or are anxious, may choose to wear face coverings during lessons. There may be a genuine medical reason why a person cannot wear a face covering. If there is such a reason, please notify the school. Students in such cases, will not be expected to wear face coverings.

We appreciate your support and patience in these difficult times.