



**OUR  
LADY'S  
SCHOOL**  
**TERENURE**

## **Returning to School:** **COVID-19 FAQ's and Guidelines**

### **Welcome Back!**

We are really looking forward to welcoming you all back to Our Lady's in the coming weeks. We know that many of you can't wait to be back, to see all of your friends again, and to return to a structured routine. We want to ensure that all of this happens whilst being as safe as possible, so time and understanding will be important on both our part and yours as we adapt to the new environment.

We know that some of you have expressed concerns about things like exams, socialising, face-coverings, assigned seating, being behind on work, and a changed school environment. There is no doubt that there will be changes to how we do some things, but that does not mean that all of the things you love about school will disappear!

We can't know for certain how long these measures will last, but nothing is permanent, and we hope to return to normality in accordance with government advice and safety as time goes on. We understand all of your fears, worries, and concerns, and want to assure you that all necessary precautions are being taken both to ensure your safety and to maintain a positive school environment. We are all working this out together, so your feedback, safety, and overall well-being are crucial to the process.

For now, we have put together a short guidebook and a few answers to questions that were gathered from your survey responses, and we will ensure to keep you informed every step of the way with any further updates.

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# Guidelines: How to keep yourself and others safe

## AVOID THE THREE C'S:

### Crowds | Close Contacts | Confined Spaces

To keep everyone safe, you must follow the following instructions at all times:

- Avoid the 3 Cs – avoid gathering on the corridors or at lockers. Conversations with friends should be held outside or at your designated seat in your classroom.
- Observe respiratory hygiene – coughing and sneezing into your elbow.
- The school will have a one-way system to assist with physical distancing. This must be followed at all times.
- You should regularly wash your hands/sanitise.
- Masks/face-coverings will be required in most settings. They are strongly recommended coming to and from school and in settings where the 3Cs are difficult.
- You should bring sanitiser, tissues and a face covering to school. Keep the sanitiser and tissues in one ziplock bag and your face covering in another and both of these can be kept in your school bag.
- We aim to keep teaching spaces well-ventilated. This may mean they are cooler than you are used to. You may choose to wear an extra base layer under your school shirt when the weather gets cooler.
- Your teachers will assign specific seats in each class. You must not move from these.
- Please avoid physical contact with other students.

Important notice for preventing COVID-19 outbreaks.

## Avoid the "Three Cs"!

- 1. Closed spaces** with poor ventilation.
- 2. Crowded places** with many people nearby.
- 3. Close-contact settings** such as close-range conversations.



One of the key measures against COVID-19 is to prevent occurrence of clusters.  
Keep these "Three Cs" from overlapping in daily life.



**The risk of occurrence of clusters is particularly high when the "Three Cs" overlap!**

In addition to the "Three Cs," items used by multiple people should be cleaned with disinfectant.

首相官邸 厚生労働省 MHLW COVID-19 Search



## What we're doing to help ensure your safety:

- Managing the risk of spread through:
  - ◆ Regular hand hygiene
  - ◆ Maintaining physical distancing
  - ◆ Application of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
  - ◆ Environmental hygiene
  
- Hand hygiene
  - ◆ Hand washing training and posters in bathrooms will be provided.
  - ◆ Access to hand washing stations in bathrooms and hand sanitizer stations throughout the school building.
  - ◆ We will plan SPHE classes with a focus on hygiene.
  
- Bathroom facilities and cleaning regimes
  - ◆ Schools have been provided with the resources, training, and advice needed to maintain a hygienic environment at all times throughout the school, including in bathroom facilities.
  - ◆ Protocols surrounding bathroom use will be explained by your form teacher on the first day back.
  - ◆ There will be systems in place to ensure regular and thorough cleaning of bathrooms.
  - ◆ There will be supervision to ensure bathrooms are not over crowded and queueing follows social distancing guidelines.
  
- Social distancing
  - ◆ A distance of 1 metre will be maintained between individual pupils and classrooms have been laid out accordingly to ensure everyone's safety.
  - ◆ As much as is possible, we will aim to reduce inter-class grouping. However, you will of course still be in your mixed option subjects and therefore not remain in your base class for the entire day.
  - ◆ The learning environment and school ethos will not be forgotten about whilst we maintain social distancing and the new health and safety routines.
  
- Face-covering/Masks
  - ◆ As the Roadmap for the Full Return to School 2020 tells us, it is required that teachers, staff and students attending secondary schools wear a face-covering when a physical distance of 2 meters from other staff or students cannot be maintained.
  - ◆ Due to our inability to separate students the required 2m in the classrooms, it is necessary for all to wear face-coverings/masks in order to reduce the risk of transmission for others and keep everyone safe.
  - ◆ Teachers also need to wear mask/face-coverings. Where they can they will wear visors to enable clear communication.

- ◆ This is new territory for everyone so we will work out the best solutions as we go to make sure everyone can communicate as clearly as possible with as little stress as possible!
- ◆ If you have a medical reason or otherwise for not wearing a mask/face-covering, you can have your parents get in touch with us to inform us and we will work out a solution.

# Coronavirus COVID-19



**Coronavirus  
COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

## Stay safe. Protect each other.

**Continue to:**



**Wash**  
your hands well and often to avoid contamination.



**Cover**  
your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue safely



**Distance**  
yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell



**Avoid**  
crowds and crowded places



**Know**  
the symptoms. If you have them self isolate and contact your GP immediately

**COVID-19 symptoms include**

- > high temperature
- > cough
- > breathing difficulty
- > sudden loss of sense of smell or taste
- > flu-like symptoms

If you have any symptoms, self-isolate to protect others and call your GP for a COVID-19 test.

**#holdfirm**

**For more information**  
[www.gov.ie/health-covid-19](http://www.gov.ie/health-covid-19)  
[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

Ireland's public health advice is guided by WHO and ECDC advice




Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# What will my school day look like?



## 1. Before Coming to School –

### 'If Unwell Stay at Home'

- If a member of our community is unwell, we are operating a 'If Unwell Stay at Home' policy.
- The length of time you must stay at home will depend on the nature of your illness. More on this will be explained when you return to school.
- Should a member of our community experience any of the symptoms of Covid-19 as outlined by the HSE and reflected in this document, that member of our community is advised to stay at home and seek appropriate medical intervention.
- Important: Wearing a face covering or mask does not remove the need to stay at home if you have symptoms.

## 2. Getting to school

- Please take personal responsibility in relation to hand and respiratory hygiene in advance of arrival.
- We encourage you to walk or cycle to school where possible.
- Where public transport is used, students need to adhere to public health advice and take the necessary and most up to date advice as outlined by the HSE.

## 3. Arriving at school

- You will be given lots of time to get familiar with the new routine at your first return-to-school session.
- Students in each year group will be told what door to enter the building and what time they should aim to arrive at school.
- School still starts at 8.30am but we need to organise ourselves a little differently. Your form teacher will explain all these changes to you and you can write down information in your homework journal as a reminder.
- Anyone who arrives between 8am and 8.10am will be seated in a socially distant set up in the GPA. After 8.10am you will go straight to your assigned seat which will have been shown to you.
- On entering the building, you must use the hand sanitizer stations that will be provided, or your own personal hand sanitizer.
- You must wear a mask/face covering that is compliant with public health guidelines whilst in the school building unless instructed by a staff member that you can remove it due to the set up in the classroom you are in.
- Lockers will be allocated to 1st, 3rd, 5th & 6th Years. These will be single lockers. A plan will be put in place that designates a time for you to go to your locker and maintain social distance.

- Make sure you keep to the one-way system that will be in place. This will be clearly marked and you can always check with a teacher before you leave a classroom what route you should take to your next location.
- **Remember:** Your form teacher will explain all of this to you on your first day back and you will get plenty of reminders to keep on track so don't worry about how you will keep on top of it all - you will have lots of help.

#### **4. In the classroom**

- You must wear your mask/face covering in the classroom unless you are instructed by a staff member that you can remove it due to the set up in the classroom you are in.
- Your teacher will let you know where your assigned seat is. This is the seat that you will stay in for that class.
- If you are changing classrooms, you must use the sanitising wipes available in each room to ensure that your desk is clean before using it.
- You will each have your own desk/space, with a 1 metre distance between you and the next student.
- Classes will be 58 minutes long to reduce the amount of times you will need to change classes throughout the day.
- Teachers will spend some time together planning how to teach the longer classes before you return to school because we know the change in class length will take everyone some getting used to!

#### **5. Break and lunchtimes**

- Leaving classrooms at break and lunch time will be managed and you will be required to eat lunch in an assigned area with an assigned group of students.
- We encourage you to get some fresh air outside during these times, where you can also meet friends from other classes once a 2 metre safe distance is maintained.
- You will be shown what area of the grounds your year group can use.
- 6th Years will, as always, be permitted to leave the school premises for lunch breaks.
- This year, as a temporary measure, 5th Year students will be allowed to leave the school premises for lunch breaks, with their parent's/guardian's written permission.
- Unfortunately, the canteen cannot operate this term. If you are in 1st to 4th Year you will need to bring a packed lunch. 5th and 6th Year students have the option to go out for lunch.

#### **6. Home-time**

- You should gather your belongings and leave the building promptly without lingering in locker areas.
- You will not be required to clear out your lockers at the end of each day. However, we do suggest that you do not leave anything valuable or essential in your locker should the school need to close with short notice.



- Your form teacher will discuss the practicalities of books and what you really need to bring with you to school each day.
- Continue to stay safe, follow guidelines, and avoid the 3 C's for your own safety when heading home.

#### 7. Co-curricular / After School Activities

- Each extra-curricular event and activity will be individually looked at in the light of health and safety and social distancing requirements and we will be in communication regarding each event / activity in due course.

#### 8. After School Study

- After school study will be offered to 6th, 5th and 3rd years this term. There will be a limited number of places available this term. We will review this in October and if possible there may be a limited number of seats available in study for 2nd Year students.

## What happens if I am not feeling well?

The measures set out in the Public Health Advice are based on two general recommendations:

1. Minimising the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community.
2. Managing the risk of spread if introduced through
  - Regular hand hygiene;
  - Maintaining physical distancing;
  - Application of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette;
  - Environmental hygiene.

In terms of Minimising the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community, it is critical that people stay at home if unwell.

**Nobody should go to school if they are unwell or any members of their household are unwell, with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. There are listed by the HSE on August 21st 2020 as follows:**

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- [a fever \(high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above\)](#)
- [a cough](#) - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- [shortness of breath](#) or breathing difficulties
- [loss or change to your sense of smell or taste](#) – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal



## What will happen if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school?

A staff member will...

- Bring the person to the designated isolation area
- Contact parents/guardians in the event of a suspected case in a pupil/student;
- Facilitate the person remaining in isolation if they cannot go home immediately;
- Support the making of arrangements for transport home or if they are too unwell to go home to contact 999 or 112 to advise it is a COVID-19 suspected case;
- Carry out an assessment of the incident to determine follow up actions;
- Arrange for the appropriate cleaning of the isolation and work areas.

**Where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 amongst school staff or pupils, we will maintain both staff and pupil confidentiality at all times and follow the instructions of HSE Public Health.**

A confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis reported in the school will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis as advised by the HSE. There will be contact tracing in place to inform any teachers, pupils, and staff who were in close contact with the confirmed case.

## Your Mental Health and Wellbeing

As you are all aware, there is a strong tradition in Our Lady's School of focusing on student wellbeing, and now is no different. All supports, including your House groups, will still be in place and ready to ease you into the new school year. Some of you have expressed concerns about your wellbeing during this time. Some of you will find this transition more tough than others. That is okay, and we are here to support you every step of the way. We are confident that in time you will all adapt to the changes, albeit at different paces, and that we as a school community will be all the stronger for it when we emerge at the other end.

Year teams, led by your Year Head, are planning Pastoral Care programmes that will help you build up your mental health and wellbeing. Students from 1st to 4th Year will be following Social, Personal and Health Education programmes. 4th, 5th and 6th Year students will partake in Career Guidance classes. All the usual support will be there to help you find your feet: your form teacher, your subject teachers, your class councillor, your Year Head, the guidance counsellors. Once we are up and running, we hope to have an extra-curricular programme in place which will offer lots of opportunities to explore activities that will boost your mental health and wellbeing.

Some essential elements for the promotion of wellbeing at this time include creating a sense of...

- ★ safety
- ★ calm
- ★ belonging and connectedness to school
- ★ self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- ★ hope

We hope to encourage this amongst the entire school community, with special measures in place for the few who may need some extra help adjusting. We want you to feel as comfortable and safe in school as you always have in the past. Though this may be a little more challenging with the new guidelines and precautions, we are certain that once you are back you will agree that one thing that will not be changing is the respect, friendship, and community that comes with being an Our Lady's student.

## Some more FAQs

### I have a question about my mask/face-covering...

- When do I have to wear it?
  - At all times when in the school building unless instructed otherwise by a staff member, including during lunch times if staying inside the school (with the exception of course being whilst you are eating). You can leave the school building for fresh air at break and lunch times and, at times, if possible, teachers may be able to squeeze in a movement/fresh air break.
- Does it need to be a surgical face mask?
  - No, any face covering that follows HSE standards is allowed (please see the following link for information on face masks, how to wash them, and how to make your own: [Face coverings, medical masks and disposable gloves](#))
  - Please ensure your mask/face-covering is appropriate for school.
- What happens if I forget my mask/face-covering or do not want to wear it?
  - If you forget your mask/face-covering, there will be a limited amount of disposable ones available in the office. However, you are responsible for bringing your own mask/face-covering in every day.
  - If you have a medical reason for not wearing a mask/face-covering, you can have your parents get in touch with us to inform us.
  - If you do not want to wear a mask/face-covering or refuse to wear one, this will be deemed to be a serious breach of the Code of Positive Behaviour and this will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures for addressing unwanted/negative behaviour outlined in the Code.

### **How will assigned seating arrangements during lunch times be decided?**

- Assigned seating is necessary to ensure your safety, and for ease of contact tracing should someone present symptoms or be diagnosed with a case of COVID-19.
- Form teachers will arrange seating plans and will work with students to ensure all are comfortable with arrangements, insofar as is possible, within our health & safety guidelines.
- We completely understand that you will want to spend time with friends in other classes during your break, which you are absolutely permitted to do as long as you meet them outside. However, you must stick to your assigned area when inside the building.

### **Will I fall behind on work if I need to stay home from school?**

- If you are absent, you will be able to use your Google Classroom for your subjects to catch up on what you have missed. Your teachers will work with you to set up a system that works and that you understand.
- We will be building on our use of the Google platform to help us organise teaching and learning during the term. You will get assistance to improve your skills using Google to help you get and stay organised with your classwork and homework.
- If we need to do a period of remote learning this will also mean we will be organised and ready to work from home.

### **Will all of the fun parts of school be gone?**

- Definitely not! We want to do everything possible to ensure that you still have a full, rich, and enjoyable school day. You will still have House activities, be able to catch up with friends outside at breaks, and we hope to resume sports, clubs, and activities as soon as possible.
- You will still have the familiar support system available to you whenever you need it, be it from your form teacher, guidance counselor, Year Head, your teachers, and all other staff and students. Your well-being is what is most important to us during these times, and we will do everything in our power to make sure you are in a positive and enjoyable environment whilst staying safe.

### **Help! I'm a 1st Year student! What will this year look like for me?**

- We understand that this is a particularly strange way for you all to begin school, but we will ensure that you feel the warmth of Our Lady's School community from the outset. And yes, you will still be assigned a House!
- We have a huge community of students and staff who are here to help you out, and though the older students may *seem* scary, they love helping you out in any way they can, and they still remember what it was like to be in your shoes!

- When you come in for your tour of the school on 26th August, you will meet some of our 6th Year Leadership team who can't wait to show you around and answer your questions. If you haven't seen their message to you yet, check it out here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCHXtB8mH50&feature=youtu.be>
- The one way system that we will have in place and clear instructions about where you need to go will ease some of your worries about being in a big new building. We will of course still make sure that you all have a map, and a detailed tour before starting. We are also planning to make sure you don't have to move around the building for classes too much during the day!
- Have a look at our 1st Year page on our website: <https://olschool.ie/admissions/incoming1styears/>

### **Help! I'm a Junior/Leaving Certificate student! What will this year look like for me?**

- We are currently waiting for further government advice and guidelines regarding state examinations but we will of course keep you informed every step of the way.
- As of August 2020, the latest update from the Department of Education is as follows:
  - "Detailed arrangements in relation to the Junior Cycle certification examinations in 2021 will be made available before the start of the school year."
  - "The Department recognises that some changes will be required to the assessment arrangements for the Leaving Certificate. Students will be provided with greater choice in written examinations; this will be supported through the provision of additional questions and/or adjustments to mandatory sections on written examination papers."
  - "The dates on which coursework briefs are issued will be brought forward to allow for additional preparation time for students and teachers."
  - "In some subjects, adjustments to the requirements for practical examinations will be made; these adjustments will reflect the need to manage access to equipment to complete the preparatory aspects."
- We can assure you that, no matter what shape your exams may take this year, we will help you every step of the way and ensure that you are receiving the correct education and support for you to excel in your academics this year.
- Your teachers are working on ways to revise the curriculum delivered to you remotely during lockdown, whilst ensuring that you get through all necessary coursework for this year. This is all being done with your best interests in mind.

### **Help! I'm a Transition Year student! What will this year look like for me?**

- Transition Year is an exciting time to expand on your knowledge of the world, refine your understanding of your chosen subjects, and explore future opportunities beyond school. There is no doubt that this will all still happen, and that you will have a fun and exciting year to flourish and develop.

- Of course, some things will need to change, and we will keep you posted regarding things like trips and work experience. Alternative arrangements will be made to make up for anything that may need to be cancelled to ensure you still have a fantastic year.

## Some FAQs from Parents...

### **What if my child's teacher is out sick?**

- Teacher unavailability is, unfortunately, an inevitable by-product of the fact that no student or staff member is permitted on school grounds if they are unwell.
- Where possible, work will be left for students at short notice. In the long term, a plan will be put in place on a case-by-case basis to ensure that your child receives the necessary work and learning environment. We will take all measures to ensure that our students' education isn't hindered as a result of this inevitability.

### **My child is presenting symptoms or is considered high-risk. What do I do?**

- Your child must stay at home if they are displaying any symptoms or feeling unwell, in which case work will be provided to them remotely. Should they display symptoms, please get in touch and we will discuss the necessary arrangements for them to learn from home until they are fit to return to school or have received a negative test result.
- If your child is considered to be at risk and you do not feel comfortable sending them to school, please do get in touch and we will design a plan for them to receive work and assistance.
- If your daughter has a medical reason to not wear a mask/face-covering, please get in touch.

### **When will after-school activities resume?**

- Each extra-curricular event and activity will be individually looked at in the light of health and safety and social distancing requirements and we will be in communication regarding each event and activity in due course.
- We firmly believe in the importance of a vibrant school experience outside the classroom and will be making every effort to work within the guidelines to protect our extra-curricular life.

### **What happens if my family is back from a foreign holiday?**

Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone. It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those on the "green" list, to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes parents and children or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. Do not send your daughter to school unless 14 days have passed after your daughter's return from a non green list country.

### **Will we be informed of any confirmed cases in the school community?**

- You will be informed of any and all confirmed cases, whilst of course maintaining the anonymity of the affected person.
- Contact tracing will be in place in order to inform those who may have been in close contact with the confirmed case.

### **What will happen should the school building need to shut again?**

- We are currently working on a structured plan should the school be required to return to online learning, of which we will inform you when all is finalised.
- In the meantime, however, we look forward to welcoming your child back to a more familiar, structured learning environment for the foreseeable future.

### **Can my child bring their laptop/iPad/electronic device to school to use in place of books?**

- For the time being, students will not be permitted to use iPads/Laptops in the class.
- Not everyone is in a position to purchase an electronic device for their child's learning at this time. With the array of changes already in place, we believe that it is in your child's best interest to keep as much normality as possible during these uncertain times.

### **What about the uniform?**

- Your daughter will wear her PE tracksuit in on the day(s) she has PE class and will stay in it all day.
- On the other days, her full school uniform is to be worn.
- There is no public health guidance directing that uniforms be washed everyday. With the usual regular changes of shirts and socks, your daughter's uniform will be fine with your usual hygiene and washing routines.
- Should any alternative guidelines emerge, we will review the uniform situation.
- As extra-curricular activities commence, we will communicate further guidance on wearing the school tracksuit for sporting activities.