



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on returning to school in Ardcoil Rís

### Q1: What are the revised reopening dates for each year group?

Monday August 31 <sup>st</sup> 2020	1 <sup>st</sup> Years return from 11.00-3.00
Tuesday September 1 <sup>st</sup> 2020	6 <sup>th</sup> Years return from 8.45-3.45 TYs return from 11.00-3.45
Wednesday September 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> Years return from 8.45-3.05
Thursday September 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2020	5 <sup>th</sup> Years return from 8.45-3.05
Friday September 4 <sup>th</sup> 2020	2 <sup>nd</sup> Years return from 8.45-3-05

### Q2: Are students back full time from their return date, i.e. are they in again the following day?

A: Yes

### Q3: Are uniforms are to be worn daily?

Yes, uniforms are to be worn daily.

### Q4: Are uniforms to be washed daily?

No. There is no requirement to wash the uniform daily as there is no public health advice that requires students to have a fresh uniform each day.

### Q5: My son is starting 1<sup>st</sup> Year, what books does he have to bring on Day 1?

A: He just has to bring a copy and a pen as well as his lunch for his first day

### Q6: Does the normal school day still stand, i.e. start at 8.45 and finish at 3.45 Monday and Tuesday and 3.05 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday?

A: Yes. The recent Travel Survey was just to ascertain existing patterns of arrival times for students

### Q7: What time will the school be open?

A: The school will open for students from 8.15am

**Q8: Is there an Introductory Meeting for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Parent(s)/Guardian(s)?**

A: Traditionally, pre-Covid-19, an Introductory Meeting for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Parent(s)/Guardian(s) took place on the same day the 1<sup>st</sup> Years started but this year that will not happen at this time due to the impact of Covid-19. Alternative arrangements for this meeting will be sent out in due course. A possibility is an online remote meeting.

**Q9: Is the TY meeting for Parent(s)/Guardian(s) still going ahead as originally scheduled?**

A: No. Traditionally, pre-Covid-19, a meeting for TY Parent(s)/Guardian(s) took place shortly after the TYs started but this year that will not happen at this time due to the impact of Covid-19. Alternative arrangements for this meeting will be sent out in due course.

**Q10: Will After School and Night Study be re-commencing when the students return to school?**

A: After school study is something we will be looking at, once the school re-opens. We need to look at the physical distancing, available space, cleaning routine etc before making a final decision. It is something we would like to offer but there are a number of factors to consider including the HSE guidelines at the time.

**Q11: Will work experience be going ahead this year for TY students?**

A: The school is looking at this in light of the impact of Covid-19 and will make a final decision in due course. This is the advice from the DES:

*Block release: In cases where it is possible for students to safely complete their work experience in accordance with public health advice and social distancing requirements, they should do so. Where it is not possible for all or some students to do so during the block(s), they should attend timetabled classes as normal during the designated weeks*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/#additional-guidelines-and-procedures>

**Q12: Will my son be required to wear a face covering? Can students opt to wear visor instead of mask?**

The guidance is in the Response Plan page 18.

<http://www.ardscoil.com/ardscoil-ris-covid-19-response-plan/>

It is a requirement that teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact. In certain situations, the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

All students on the post primary transport scheme should be asked to wear face coverings unless there is a good reason not to do so.

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:

- Any person with difficulty breathing
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

**Q13: Are students required to bring their own face masks?**

A: Yes. Students should have a supply of reusable, washable face coverings that will allow students to wear a fresh face mask each day

**Q14: What happens if my son misplaces his face mask or it breaks when he is in school?**

A: Each classroom will have disposable face masks for students if a back-up face covering is needed during the day

**Q15: Will the students have access to their lockers?**

A: Yes, at present, students will have access to their lockers.

**Q16: Will the canteen be open?**

A: No. The canteen is temporarily closed until the mid-term break, due to the impact of physical distancing, at which point the situation will be reviewed. Please note the all microwaves have been removed due to the impact of Covid-19.

**Q17: Will students have to bring in their own lunches?**

A: Yes as the canteen is temporarily closed until the mid-term break and students will have to bring in their own lunches. Please note the all microwaves have been removed due to the impact of Covid-19.

**Q18: Will the water fountains be available to the students?**

A: No due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions

**Q19: Will PE classes still go ahead?**

Yes. PE is part of the curriculum; however PE may operate slightly differently in terms of access to dressing rooms and use of equipment etc, with further information to follow in due course.

**Q20: What about extra-curricular activities – are they going ahead?**

A: The school's focus at present is on the reopening of the school. The situation regarding extra-curricular activities will be looked at shortly after the school reopens

**Q21: My son is starting in 1<sup>st</sup> Year, what is the dress code for PE?**

A: We do not have an Ardscoil Rís crested specific PE uniform. Students are required to wear their own sports clothes, e.g. shorts, t-shirt and runners

**Q22: Do students bring their books, bags pencil cases, and lunch boxes etc to school?**

A: At present yes, once items are not shared. Where possible lunches should be wrapped in paper so as to reduce the use of lunch boxes

**Q23: Will students have to stay in the same classroom and the teachers travel to the students?**

A: In terms of the classrooms, based on the Department of Education Illustrative Drawings and observing the social distancing recommendations ([www.gov.ie/backtoschool](http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool)), students will move to the different classes they have and teachers will remain in the classroom, albeit the teachers might be in different classrooms than they were in previously due to the class size and the need to maintain the 1 metre distancing. The school has also have created some new classrooms to accommodate classes within the school. Again this will be kept under review and all school reopening procedures will remain fluid and under review. Further information will follow in due course

**Q24: Will there be a new student council this year?**

A: In terms of the Student Council, the Council is a very important part of the Student Voice process in the school and will continue to have an important role in school life. How elections will take place is something we will have to look at in, perhaps, mid-September when the school is reopened.

**Q25: Can I visit the school without an appointment?**

A: Ardscoil Rís now has revised procedures around Covid-19 Safety Procedures for Visitors

Before visiting the school:

- Ask yourself if your visit to the school is truly essential. At this time, many meetings that would previously have occurred face-to-face will now be held over video call or phone call.
- ***We ask all visitors to the school to make an appointment in advance of your visit.***
- Please assess yourself for symptoms of Coronavirus. If you are experiencing symptoms, please ring the school to cancel your appointment/delivery. If you are waiting on the results of a test for Covid-19 or have been informed that you should be tested for Covid-19, please cancel your appointment/delivery until you have received your test results.
- Please follow HSE guidelines regarding hand hygiene and mask use.

- Please ring the school when you have arrived to be let into the building. The number will be posted on the entry ways.

During your visit:

- ***Entrance to the school is strictly through the main reception doors only***
- You must log your visit with Reception upon arrival in the school. You will be asked to log your name, business, reason for visit, and contact details for tracing purposes.
- Hand sanitising stations are located around the school. Please make use of these facilities as needed.
- Please keep track of who you are in contact with and where you go during your visit to the school, as much as is practical. You will be asked to log these details on the same sheet before you leave.
- We ask visitors where possible to follow HSE guidelines regarding mask use and hand hygiene.
- You must sign out with Reception before leaving the school.

After your visit:

- The HSE is responsible for all contact tracing where contact with a case of Coronavirus is suspected. Your contact details as logged during your visit will be used for this purpose by the HSE if needed. Details will not be stored by the school or used for other purposes

**Q26: Who signs contact tracing log? Visitors only?**

A: The contact tracing log is required so that if there is a case of Covid 19 in the school, all those who might have been in the building and in contact with an infected person can be easily identified. As each school keeps a roll of students and would have a system for all staff to report their absence, this negates the need for staff and students to sign the log. All other callers to the school should sign the log.

**Q27: My son is not yet 13 and in one of the signs sent to schools indicates that anyone under 13 years of age should not be required to wear a face covering.**

A: This is not the case in post primary schools. The Ardscoil Rís Response Plan, states that it is a requirement that students attending post primary school wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

**Q28: What happens when students enter each classroom?**

A: When a student enters each classroom he should –

1. Clean his hands using the hand sanitiser in each classroom
2. Take an antibacterial wipe and clean down his desk
3. Dispose of the antibacterial wipe in the bin
4. Clean his hands using the hand sanitiser once again
5. Sit in his seat and the lesson will begin

**Q29: How does ventilation of school facilities happen?**

Rooms should have adequate ventilation. Doors/windows should be opened to allow air to circulate whenever feasible. Mechanical ventilation systems have been cleaned and maintained

**Q30: Will there be a facility for teachers/staff and pupils to be tested straight away when people present with symptoms of Covid-19?**

A: The Government aims to have rapid testing for anyone displaying symptoms – this will also apply in the case of school staff and pupils.

**Q31: Does a student who displays COVID 19 symptoms have to undergo a test before they can return to school?**

The public health advice on what to do if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms can be found here: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

**Q32: What should parents do if they or their children have tested positive for Covid-19?**

A: The HSE will advise close contacts of anyone with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. Parents should follow the advice of the HSE in these situations.

**Q33: What are the guidelines if a parent works abroad for periods of time and then returns home? Do their children continue to come to school or do they remain at home for a period?**

A: The general public health advice for returning to Ireland having worked abroad should be followed by the person who has worked abroad (in this case the parent). This will not prevent that person's children from attending school. The parent should follow all of the HSE guidelines on their return home.

**Q34: Are siblings of suspected Covid-19 cases also to be isolated in school prior to collection from building?**

A: No. The advice in relation to dealing with a suspected case is set out in the HPSC health advice on reopening schools and in the School COVID-19 Response Plan. The person (staff or pupil) with the symptoms should go home to self-isolate, contact their GP for advice and the HSE will then decide, based on the circumstances in each case, what constitutes a close contact for the purpose of deciding who else in the school/family requires to self-isolate and/or be tested.

**Q35: If a pupil is sent home with suspected Covid-19 and is asked to isolate and await a test, what happens to their siblings in other classes?**

A: It is a matter for the HSE to advise as to who is considered a close contact and therefore required to either self-isolate and or present for testing. See answer to the question above.

**Q36: If a pupil complains of being unwell and is isolated and sent home should siblings of the pupil be isolated and go home also?**

A: No. See answer to questions directly above.

**Q37: What happens in a suspected case? Are all families of children in the class informed if there is a suspected case? Are all families of children to include siblings informed- including neighbouring schools?**

A: The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

**Q38: What about an isolation area in school?**

A: This matter is dealt with in the HPSC public health advice on reopening schools (page 23 Section 5.7) and in the School COVID-19 Response Plan (Section 8). The isolation area does not need to be a separate room, although that is preferable. If it is not a separate room it should be 2 metres away from others in that room.

**Q39: Is there a definitive published procedure for dealing with suspect Covid-19 cases both with children and teachers?**

A: Yes. The HPSC public health on reopening schools and the School COVID-19 Response Plan sets out a step by step guide of how to manage a suspected case and includes a checklist to ensure that all the steps are followed at Appendix 7 of the School Response Plan.

**Q40: What happens if a student presents with symptoms? If presenting just one symptom or will there be a checklist i.e. pupil must present with minimum 3 symptoms before acting?**

A: This is dealt with on the advice as to how to deal with symptoms which states that if you have ANY common symptom of COVID-19 you should follow the steps set out. Link attached again for ease of reference. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

**Q41: If there is a Covid-19 case in the school, is it the responsibility of the school or the HSE to let parents know?**

This is dealt with at Section 8 of the School COVID-19 Response plan which states that it is the HSE who will inform parents/staff who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

**Q42: What happens if there is a suspected case, must the school close that room for 72 hours? And does that mean leaving that class at home for 72 hours?**

A:The HPSC public health advice on reopening schools (page 22 cleaning/disinfecting rooms where a pupil or staff member with a suspected case was present) and the School COVID-19 Response Plan Section 7 Page 25 and 26) sets out the cleaning regime that should apply. It does not require the room to be out of use for 72 hours – *“once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused”*. 72 hours is referenced only for the double bagging of waste before it is presented for general collection.

**Q43: If a student has a suspected case and the parent is advised to contact their GP for possible testing, should the school ask for a medical cert confirming a positive or negative test - or is it sufficient to take parent's word on the matter?**

A: It is not appropriate for the school to look for a medical certificate of a positive/negative result. Parents and staff should follow the HSE advice on what to do if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

**Q44: What about pupils with medical conditions who have been told that they can go back to school, but parents don't want to send them?**

A: Some pupils or their parents may be experiencing anxiety about the return to school in a Covid-19 context to such an extent that the pupil does not return as expected. All schools are expected to support such pupils in making a full return to school and to provide supports to ensure their anxiety is managed in such a way as to enable them to engage productively in learning in school. The Department will provide further guidance on how to support high risk students in the coming days.

**Q45: If a family is returning from abroad what is the direction regarding quarantine and that family?**

A: It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of 'normal precautions' ("green"), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school staff, 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.

**Q46: What if a parent or other member of a household has to self-isolate? Do the children in the family still attend school?**

The HSE will advise who within a family are considered close contacts and who should self-isolate and/or present for testing.

**Q47: Is the Department of Education and Skills (DES) issuing guidelines to parents re going back to school e.g. parents not to send children into school with temperatures?**

A: The Department has prepared a national media campaign to run later in the month of August to provide advice and support to parents and pupils on school reopening. It will include issues such as advice on staying at home if unwell.

**Q48: Will the school be taking temperatures?**

A: The Response Plan does not provide for the taking of temperatures. It is not the role of the school to take anyone's temperature

**Q49: What will happen for the morning break and lunch times for my son?**

A: Students will have staggered breaks and lunches to help maintain social distancing. A 2metre distance will be in place while students have their masks off while eating at break time and lunch time



**Q50: Will there be hand sanitisers in the school?**

A: Hand sanitiser dispensers will be installed at all entrances, in every classroom and outside toilets.

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- on arrival at school
- before eating or drinking
- after using the toilet (use hand sanitiser going in to the toilet area)
- after playing outdoors
- when their hands are physically dirty
- when they cough or sneeze

**Q51: What has the school done to mitigate the risk of Covid-19?**

The school has and continues to implement the guidelines recommended by the Department of Education and Skills for a safe return to school for all staff and students. These include:

- Publishing the Ardscoil Rís Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of the school, available at <http://www.ardscoil.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Ardscoil-R%C3%ADs-COVID-19-Response-Plan-V1.0-21082020.pdf> with a Covid-19 Policy and Risk Assessment contained within
- Reconfiguring all classrooms to maximise distancing between all students
- Implementing 1m distancing between students in all classes
- Increasing entry and exit points for students
- Staggered break and lunch times.
- Covid-19 Induction for all staff.
- Installing sanitising dispensers inside all classrooms and at various locations throughout the school
- Implementing an enhanced cleaning schedule
- A one-way system of movement in the school
- Installing perspex screens where necessary
- Providing an isolation area for students/staff who feel unwell during the day

Recruiting additional teaching staff, cleaning staff and supervisors

**Q52: Should my son bring his own hand sanitiser?**

A: If a parent wishes to give their son a small bottle of hand sanitiser that is ok

**Q53: What advice do you have for Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Students regarding travelling to school?**

A: Where possible students should walk or cycle. If students are being driven to school Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may consider dropping students a little further along NCR/Ennis Road/ Shelbourne Road and students could walk from there.

Please be advised of revised traffic systems in the environs of the school, including the new reduction of inbound lanes on Shannon Bridge from two to one lane inbound, the second lane is now a two-way cycle lane. Further information can be got from this link:

<https://www.limerick.ie/council/newsroom/road-notice/road-traffic-notice-new-traffic-system-commence-operation-junction>

**Q54: Will a one-way system be in use**

A: Yes and this will be on display in the school and will be explained to students on their return

**Q55: How will students pass one another in the corridors**

A: Briefly passing someone in a hall is unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. We will observe the practice of keeping to the right when on stairwells and corridors will go through a plan with students on their return in relation to how to move safely around the school. Signage will be provided on the corridors to ensure the safe movement of students. Students must go straight to their classrooms and must not congregate in the corridors or hallways.

**Q56: Will the new Covid-19 arrangements be communicated to my son?**

A: The new Covid-19 arrangements as they apply to Ardscoil Rís will be explained to your on on his return to school on the first day back

**Remember the following:**

- The HSE has COVID-19 Advice for parents on the following link:  
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-schools-and-parents-resources/back-to-school-advice-for-parents.pdf>
- The most important action we can take to protect ourselves from Covid-19 is regular hand-washing, good respiratory hygiene, maintaining physical distance of 2 metres or wearing a mask when that is not possible and isolating when displaying any of the symptoms of Covid-19

- All members of the school community will practise respiratory hygiene, i.e covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- We kindly request that you discuss the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene with son before coming back to school.

### **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- ✓ High temperature
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

***This list of FAQs will be amended and updated accordingly, please check on the school website [www.ardscoil.com](http://www.ardscoil.com)***

**Finally if you have any further questions as they relate to your son please email [officeardscoil@gmail.com](mailto:officeardscoil@gmail.com)**

**Non Covid-19 questions can be emailed to [asroffice@ardscoil.com](mailto:asroffice@ardscoil.com)**

END

As of 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020