



# **Bridgetown College**

**Return to School**

**Key Messages**

Parents – Students



# Bridgetown College

## Key Messages



## Parents & Guardians



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Dear Parents/Guardians,

We have created this detailed information booklet to help understand more of the changes we have made to our school community this year to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

All information is accurate as of August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The information contained within is constantly updating and is subject to change. The decisions we have made are in line with the guidance sent out by the Government of Ireland, The Department of Education & Skills and the HSE.

The documentation which informed these decisions can be found at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/>

Please read all the information fully. Parents are also encouraged to watch the videos for parents specifically which can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/>. We encourage you to sit down and explain these changes with your son/daughter before he/she returns to school. All of these new systems and more will be explained to them when they return to school, but it would be helpful if he/she was aware of some of them before they return.

We plan on spending the first few weeks back introducing our new systems, behaviours, expectations, etc.

Mr. Power  
Principal



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### COVID-19 Policy Statement & Response Plan

Bridgetown College Board of Management has a COVID-19 Policy Statement and Response Plan in place. Please see our website for details. It can be found [here](#).

### Symptoms of COVID-19

1. Temperature
2. Cough
3. Loss of taste or smell
4. Shortness of breath

Minor symptoms include:

1. Feeling tired
2. Aches and Pains
3. Headaches
4. Sore throat
5. Diarrhoea

Your son/daughter should not attend school under any circumstances where he/she is experiencing symptoms. You should phone your GP and follow their direction. **Very important:** Your son/daughter will also need to restrict their movements for 14 days if they live with someone who had symptoms of the coronavirus, even though they may feel well themselves. They should limit their movements if they are identified as a close contact of a case of COVID-19.

Please see the following link for more information:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/managing-coronavirus-at-home/if-you-live-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus.html>



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<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Coronavirus</b> Symptoms range from mild to severe	<b>Flu</b> Abrupt onset of symptoms	<b>Cold</b> Gradual onset of symptoms
<b>Fever or chills</b>	Common	Common	Rare
<b>Cough</b>	Common (usually dry)	Common (usually dry)	Mild
<b>Shortness of breath</b>	Common	No	No
<b>Lost or changed sense of smell or taste</b>	Common	Rare	Rare
<b>Fatigue</b>	Common	Common	Sometimes
<b>Aches and pains</b>	Common	Common	Common
<b>Sore throat</b>	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
<b>Headaches</b>	Sometimes	Common	Rare
<b>Runny or Stuffy Nose</b>	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common



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### Reasons your son/daughter should not attend school

If your son/daughter is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Students who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Students who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Students who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Students who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Students with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
- Students who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days if that country is not on the green list. Click [here](#) for the list of countries on the Covid green list.
- Students who are generally unwell.

### Students with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.

Parents should seek advice from their GP/consultant if they think their student is in a high-risk group. If they are advised not to attend, then the parents should furnish the school with a letter containing words to this effect. The school will then support the student with his/her learning remotely.





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### Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a person in your student's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19:

- The parents of all students in the class will be notified.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

### Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Students should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a student displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures that will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately – please ensure all contact details are up to date and in use, and also provide the name and number of a contact who will be in a position to collect a student promptly.
- The student will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic student and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic student at all times.
- A mask will be provided for the student presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- An assessment will be made as to whether the student who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents who can then call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.



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- The school will facilitate the student presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
- The student presenting with symptoms will be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- If the student is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick student is displaying symptoms of Covid-19.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

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

We are not qualified to make a distinction between Covid 19 symptoms and symptoms of other illnesses. Be prepared. Make arrangements for your student to be collected in the event of a phone call.



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### First Years First Day

Regrettably, parents/guardians may not accompany their son/daughter into the school on the first day. Students must come to the front door of the school and then they can enter the school after sanitising their hands. On entry there will be staff there to greet them and to show them where to go. Students should arrive no earlier than 8.50am if being dropped by car and remain 2 metres apart from other students as they arrive and follow the signage and floor markings for guidance. As per national guidelines, all students will wear face coverings and will be required to do so in the school building and outside where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. This will be explained to students during the induction training. Certain students may not be required to wear face coverings and that will be arranged on an individual basis.

### Student access to the school building before and after school

School will start at 9.00am every day. Students should arrive no earlier than 8.50am if not travelling by bus and remain 2 metres apart. There is a one-way system operating in each of the school buildings. Students will be provided with a detailed map. Students may only enter at the designated entry points and follow the one-way system. Students who arrive earlier on buses are allowed in the canteen. However, we ask that they maintain social distancing with others and be mindful of the areas they go and where they sit. The classrooms will be open from 8.45am. Students are to go directly to the classroom they are timetabled for that morning and sit



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down. Students will be assigned seats in each class and it is important that they only sit in their designated seat.

As per national guidelines, all students will wear face coverings and will be required to do so in the school building at all times and outside where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. Before entering the school buildings, students must sanitise their hands.

At the end of the school day, all students must leave the building. Students in exam classes have the option of attending evening study. Students must now make arrangements for how they will get home from school if they previously had to wait in our school building for collection. Students who take the bus home must wait in their assigned bus zone adhering to social distancing while they wait for their bus to arrive. These bus zones will be explained to students at their induction. This information is all subject to change and is constantly updating.

### **Physical Distancing Outside of School**

It is essential that your son/daughter practices physical and social distancing while outside of school and on his/her way to and from school. Any action outside of school which is not in keeping with HSE guidelines on COVID-19 prevention has the potential to put everyone in our school community at risk. Our school has worked tirelessly to put in place all of these new measures to keep everyone safe. It will be pointless, if students disregard the basics of how to prevent COVID19 whilst not on our school premises.



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### **Using a car to get to and from school:**

We appreciate that a lot of students from different households may share a private car to and from school. We understand with the latest guidance on having to wear face coverings in cars in this instance, that more students may now be taking private cars and that you may now wish to drive your son/daughter to school. We wish to discourage parents and guardians where possible from clogging up our school entrance for ease of flow in and out of the grounds. Our school gate will be closed for all car users, except our staff. Please be mindful of dropping your son/daughter off directly outside of our school on a busy road. Cars should not stop abruptly in the road. Students should not be disembarking from cars on the main roads without checking if it is safe to do. We encourage parents to drop off their children at a safe location as far away from the school as possible and to arrange appropriate places for collection at the end of the school day. Congestion needs to be avoided where possible.

### **Breaktimes and Lunchtimes**

There are some changes to breaktimes and lunchtimes this year to maximise physical distancing and interaction between year groups. However, it is not possible to show these changes on the students' timetables so they will be adjusted by each student as it is explained to them at their induction day.



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### Lunches - Canteen

Students will be restricted to the canteen and the immediate area outside at break time. Lunch time will be as normal but separated into junior and senior to minimise the number of students out at the same time. Additional seating will be provided outside. Please remind students that sharing of food is not permitted.

Lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be washed thoroughly, inside and out, each day. The canteen will have its own procedures and students will receive information on their induction day. Due to COVID restrictions, students are advised to bring their own refillable water bottle each day. Water fountains/taps are still going to be available however we advise students to minimise the use of these. We will be supplying a hand sanitising unit at these fountain and taps. Students must use them and socially distance when queuing.

### Toilet Etiquette

Urinals will be blocked off in the male toilets. Students will use the cubicles. The number of students allowed in the toilets at the one time is determined by the number of cubicles in the toilets.

If the cubicles are all in use when a student enters the bathroom, they need to exit and line up outside the door and adhere to social distancing as they do so. When a student exits the toilet, the next student in the line may enter. After using the toilets, good hand washing is essential and must be carried out. Hand sanitising alone is not sufficient.



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### Corridor Etiquette

Due to large numbers on the move between classes, we ask all student to follow the one way system and walk on the left hand side of the corridor in the very small number of areas where there is two way traffic. Students are to move promptly to class. It is important to maintain social distancing on the corridor where possible. Once the student reaches their class they must sanitise their hands on entry and take their designated seat.

### Handwashing and Sanitising Regime for Students

#### Hand Hygiene:

Your son/daughter will need to regularly clean and sanitise their hands. Hand sanitiser can be found in every classroom and across the school building in main shared spaces. He/she is responsible to use hand sanitiser on arrival to each classroom before sitting down.

Time	Method
Upon entering school	Sanitiser
Before eating at little break	Sanitiser
After returning from break	Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
Before eating at lunchtime	Sanitiser
After returning from lunch	Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
Before going home	Sanitiser
*After using toilet	Handwashing





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### Classrooms

Students will be distanced insofar as is possible, with a minimum of 1m distancing achieved in all rooms. Classrooms have been modified to create as much space as possible.

Disinfectant will be used in all classrooms and where students must move to a different room or desk. We recommend that students bring their own wipes to minimise cross contamination to wipe clean their area before taking their seat. Teachers will do the same when they enter a new classroom. Students are expected to carry out this task efficiently. Specific foot operated bins will be provided in each room for the disposal of wipes, masks and any other potentially contaminated item.

### Lockers

Lockers are allocated to allow for physical distancing. Instead of having all the lockers for each year group in one area, they are allocated to year groups in alternate rows. Access to lockers will be timed to encourage physical distancing.

### Uniform

Students will still be required to wear their normal school uniform to school every-day as per the uniform guidelines in their school journal. As the school will be opening windows and doors to aid ventilation in the school to maximise air quality, the school may become cold in the winter. It will be necessary for students to have a school jacket. These are available from the usual uniform providers.





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### PE

Where possible, PE will take place outdoors and use of equipment will be confined to the sets for that class group. Classes may take additional breaks outside during the school day. Changing rooms will be operated in line with the physical distancing guidelines for schools and students are asked to change quickly for PE. Students are encouraged to bring necessary hygiene items with them for after their P.E lessons, e.g. deodorant, water wipes, sanitiser, towel, etc. Showers will not be in use. This information is all subject to change and is constantly updating.

### Students' Equipment and Stationery

- Students should bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc. to school in their own pencil case to prevent the sharing of equipment.
- Students may be required to submit homework through Microsoft Teams and there will be training for this in the early stages of the school year. While it is not essential, we would encourage parents/guardians to invest in a laptop device for their student's schoolwork, if possible.

### Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, computers and the equipment used for practical subjects. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning



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products must be done by students after each use to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

### Parents/Guardians visiting the school

Unfortunately, there will be no access for parents/guardians to the school without a prior appointment being made. This will be strictly enforced. This appointment will be made either directly by the member of staff who wishes to see you. If you need to make an appointment to visit the school, you should contact the main school office directly by phone/email to do this. You are encouraged to not visit the school without an appointment. If you are visiting the school, you will be required to sign in and out of the school by signing our contact tracing logbook and filling in a visitor questionnaire form. Parents who wish to sign in or out their child must use the school app. Detailed instructions will follow.

### Payments

Where possible, payments should be made through Way2Pay to avoid physical handling of money.

### PPE - Face Coverings/Masks:

The Department of Education advise that face coverings should be worn by staff and students in post-primary schools where 2m social distance cannot be maintained. Students must wear facemask where required and when asked to do so. Within our school community there



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are people who may have underlying health conditions or who live with family members with underlying health conditions and we must all do what is required to avoid COVID-19 coming into our community.

When everyone wears a mask, we protect each other, our school and our families. A mask is worn, not only to protect yourself but to reduce transmission of COVID-19, thus protecting others. Masks must be worn in Bridgetown College when on the move in the corridor and in classrooms during classes. Zip lock bags must also be brought into school so students can store their face covering at times where they can have a break from their mask outside. These zip lock bags must be washed regularly. Please visit the HSE website for more guidelines on face coverings.

While students should utilise their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, the school will have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings available in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

### **Social Distancing:**

To make our school as safe and healthy as possible we are asking all students to work together to limit contact and the possible spread of COVID-19. We do this by trying our best to stay 2 metres away from each other in social areas, and by socialising and eating outdoors where the risk is significantly reduced. No shaking hands, hugs, or any physical contact with friends and peers. No sharing pens, markers or supplies with each other. It is important that you have your son/daughter has her own supply of all stationery that she may need as is the case normally. The classrooms



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are set up in such a way that 1 metre physical distancing can be maintained. Students will be timetabled into rooms that can fit the required number of students. It is very important that students do not move or rearrange desks or chairs in order that everyone in the class can help each other stay safe and healthy. At the end of the school day your son/daughter should leave through his/her nearest exit.

### Extra Cleaning:

At the end of every class, the desk your son/daughter has been sitting at must be cleaned. Students will be asked to help facilitate this process at the end of class by wiping down their desks with sanitising wipes.

### Learning Support

In keeping with our special educational needs (SEN) policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class and small-group support. Initially, the focus will be primarily on welcoming the students back, giving them a chance to speak about how they feel, and establishing relationships and routines. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of the minimum amount of interaction between students.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.



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- Where students receive support in one of the SEN rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each student in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SEN rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending. Where possible, resources in SEN settings will be stored in individual pouches for each student to limit sharing, and the pouches can then be wiped and sanitised.
- SNAs will continue to provide support and will wear appropriate PPE.

## FAQs

Can I send in a bottle of sanitiser with my student?

Yes, but please remind your student it is for personal use. There will be sufficient quantities of sanitiser throughout the school.

Must my child wear a facemask?

Staff and students are required to wear face covering while they are in the building at all times and outdoors where a physical distance of 2m cannot be maintained.

Will parent/teacher meetings be taking place?

We are awaiting further guidance on this.

What if I need to speak with my student's teacher?



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Please contact the school office or your student's teacher via email. Do not write notes in the journal.

What happens if my student forgets their lunch or drinks or other items?

The school will contact you so you can drop one to the school for your son/daughter. A drop off area will be provided for this so that interaction with staff is not necessary. Items being dropped should be labelled with the student's name.

My son/daughter has hay fever and sneezes quite a bit, will he/she be sent home?

If your son/daughter has an underlying condition such as hay fever (as many of us have) please make sure the class teacher is aware.

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

What if my son/daughter is sent home with a suspected case of Covid 19?

We would advise that you contact your GP/HSE for further advice. If a student is unwell, they should under no circumstances be sent back to school.



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Are parents permitted in the school building?

No, not unless collecting a student presenting with Covid 19 symptoms or have received prior permission and have been invited in from the reception area/front door.

My son/daughter is in a base class with some other students, can they still interact with their other friends at break time?

Yes, absolutely, students can still chat with students in other classes or year groups if they keep the required distance from other students.

How will physical distance work in classrooms?

At the start of the school year we will be distancing students as much as possible, with approximately 1m between all students in classrooms. This will not eliminate students from interacting with each other or prevent talk and discussion.

What happens if my student is injured while at school?

Our first aid policy will be followed, but staff are required to wear PPE to apply first aid.

Will teachers talk to the students about Covid 19?

Yes, from day one we will be re-teaching cough etiquette, hand hygiene, reinforcing the idea of social distancing/reduced physical contact, and chatting about Covid 19. The aim will be on reassurance and promoting calmness and safety.





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Will the students wear their uniform?

Yes, it is business as normal in relation to uniform. There is no guidance from the Department of Education or HSPC to the contrary. As the school may be cold in the winter months to facilitate good ventilation, it will be necessary for them to have a uniform coat.

Will after school activities be taking place?

After school activities will take place adhering to all of the schools procedures until such time we are given different guidelines.

Will the school be cleaned each day?

Yes, and commonly touched surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day. Both staff and students will be responsible for cleaning their own work area each time they move to a new location.

What will be the most difficult issue for schools and parents?

When students display symptoms of Covid 19. We will have to ring you and you will have to come and collect your child immediately. Your child will be brought to the isolation area. These are the government guidelines. We are not qualified to make a distinction between Covid 19 symptoms and symptoms of other illnesses. Be prepared. Make arrangements for your student to be collected in the event of a phone call.

Will this document be updated?

Yes. It is an evolving situation and we will most likely have to change elements of it when we observe it in practice. We will be reviewing our





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procedures constantly. We will also be in contact with you closer to the return to school date with more information.

[How do I find out about issues not addressed in this document?](#)

If you have any queries or concerns that are not addressed in this document, please email [bridgetowncollege@wwetb.ie](mailto:bridgetowncollege@wwetb.ie) and we will update this document periodically.