



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on returning to school.

### St Munchin's College

**Q1: What are the revised reopening times & dates for each year group next week?**

**Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August:**

08.45-15.40: Full Timetabled Classes for all 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Years only.

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September:**

08.45-15.40: Full Timetabled Classes for all 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Years only.

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September:**

08.45-13.45: Full Timetabled Classes for all T.Y & 5<sup>th</sup> Years only.

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September:**

08.45-15.40: Full Timetabled Classes for all students.

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September:**

08.45-15.00: Full Timetabled Classes for all students.

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

A: No- see above

**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. However, students with soiled or dirty uniforms should be sent to the DP's office.

**Q5: My son is starting 1<sup>st</sup> Year, what books does he have to bring in daily?**

Since all 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> years have no lockers this year, they are expected to bring in 9 soft back copies (one for each subject) each day. They are not required to bring in school books as these will be accessed by teachers through e-books.

**Q6: Does the normal school day still stand, i.e. start at 8.45 and finish at 3.40 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday with 1.45 on Wednesday and 3pm on Friday?**

A: Yes. The only exception is for 1<sup>st</sup> year students who will finish 10 minutes earlier each day.

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

A: The school will open each morning for students from 8.00am

**Q8: Will After School and Night Study be re-commencing when the students return to school?**

After school and Night Study will be initially made available to all 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Year students and will take place in the Canteen & Assembly Hall respectively at the usual times. Any additional places will be offered to other students once all 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Years have been careered for.

**Q9: Will work experience be going ahead this year for TY students?**

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

**Q10: Will students be required to wear a face covering? Can students opt to wear visor instead of mask?**

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.

**Q11: Are students required to bring their own face masks?**

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

**Q12: What happens if a student misplaces his face mask or it breaks when he is in school?**

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

**Q13: Will the students have access to their lockers?**

At present, all 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Year students will have access to a locker.

**Q14: Will the canteen be open?**

No. The canteen is closed until at least 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.

**Q15: Will students have to bring in their own lunches?**

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.

**Q16: Will the vending machines be available to the students?**

No due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. However, we have installed in 2 electronic water dispensers on the A and C Floors.

**Q17: 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.

**Q18: What about extra-curricular activities – are they going ahead?**

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 but no activities, training are being planned until after September 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Q19: 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.

**Q20: Can I visit the school without an appointment?**

St Munchin's College 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

**Q21: Who signs contact tracing log? Visitors only?**

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.

**Q22: A student who is not yet 13- some 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. St Munchin's College Response Plan, states that it is a requirement that students attending post primary school wear a face covering (face mask) when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

**Q23: What happens when students enter each classroom?**

- Teacher Based Classrooms are in operation, so students will be moving around from class to class.
- On arrival at a new classroom students follow the same steps every time. They are in charge of clearing your own desk. **Do not sit at a desk unless YOU the student have firstly cleaned it down.**
- ✓ *Take a wipe from the teacher's desk (these are large, industrial sized, anti -bacterial wipes)*
- ✓ *Use the wipe to clean and sanitize their work station (i.e. their desk, chair)*
- ✓ *Place the used wipe in the bin*
- ✓ *Sanitize their hands*
- ✓ *Take their seat*
- Once class has finished, students will sanitize when leaving the classroom and move along the corridor to the next class. The above cleaning and sanitizing of their desks and chairs will be **performed in every class that students go into.**

**Q24: 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. Additional ventilation may be required in our Computer Rooms due to the volume of machines.

**Q25: Will there be a facility for teachers/staff and pupils to be tested straight away when people present with symptoms of Covid-19?**

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

**Q26: 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 has been sent to all students and staff (Pathway to Re-opening Schools)

**Q27: What should parents do if they or their children have tested positive for Covid-19?**

See above- 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.

**Q28: 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?**

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.

**Q29: Are siblings of suspected Covid-19 cases also to be isolated in school prior to collection from building?**

No (See Pathway to Re-opening Schools). 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.

**Q30: 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?**

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.

**Q31: If a pupil complains of being unwell and is isolated and sent home should siblings of the pupil be isolated and go home also?**

No. See answer to questions directly above.

**Q32: 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?**

(See Pathway to Re-opening Schools)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.

**Q33: What about an isolation area in school?**

This matter is dealt with in the HPSC public health advice on reopening schools (page 23 Section 5.7) and is located in the Old Nun's Wing of the College campus.

**Q34: 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.

**Q35: If a family is returning from abroad what is the direction regarding quarantine and that family?**

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.

**Q36: 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.

**Q37: 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?**

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.

**Q38: Will the school be taking temperatures?**

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

**Q39: What will happen for the morning break and lunch times for students?**

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

**Q40: Will there be hand sanitisers in the school?**

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

**Q41: 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 Covid-19 Policy and Return to Work Protocols
- Reconfiguring classrooms to maximise distancing between all students
- Implementing 1m distancing between students in all classes and the installation of screens for student and staff protection
- Increasing entry and exit points for students
- Staggered break and lunch times.
- Covid-19 Induction for all staff and students.

- Installing sanitising dispensers inside all classrooms and at various locations throughout the school
- Implementing an enhanced cleaning schedule
- A two-way system (walk on the left) of movement in the school
- Installing perspex screens where necessary
- Providing an isolation area (Covid Room) for students/staff who feel unwell during the day
- Recruiting additional teaching staff, cleaning staff and supervisors

**Q42: What advice have we given to Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Students regarding travelling to school?**

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 from the College gates and students could walk from there.

**Q43: Will a new 2-way system be in use**

Yes and this will be on display in the school (arrows) and will be explained to students on their return.

Exception: B8/B9 (One-Way System)- when students come out of these classrooms, they turn right to access their next class by using the black stairs.

**Q44: How will students pass one another in the corridors?**

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 left when on stairwells and corridors and we 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.

**Q45: Will the new Covid-19 arrangements be communicated to all students and parents?**

The new Covid-19 arrangements as they apply to St Munchin's College will be explained to everyone on their return to school from the first day back

**Q46: What do students who feel sick do during the School Day?**

If a student feels sick (for any reason) during the school day, they will be asked to tell their class teacher and the class teacher sends them to Dave or I. There is no need to send students to their tutors, just send them straight to us. This is to prevent a student who may have Covid symptoms, wondering around the school, looking for a tutor/year head.

**Q47: Is there Assigned Seating:**

To help with our contact tracing, can we all assign seats to the students in all our classes. We are suggesting that the assignment of seats would be in alphabetical order, starting from the external



window with the first child on your roll, according to VS ware. If we all use the system of one behind the other and then starting at the top again for row 2. There will of course be exceptions to this rule i.e. some students will need to be close to the board etc. you will have to move students due to behaviour which is totally acceptable, but by enlarge if we follow the above system, the same students should be sitting close to others in most (not all) classes. If you need to move a student then that is your professional prerogative to do so.

**Q48: Where are the new Student Waiting Areas?**

**Discipline:** If a student is sent to Dave or I for discipline reasons, they should be directed to the seating area located where the vending machines used to be.

**Sick:** If a student is sent to Dave or I due to the fact that they are feeling unwell, they remain in the area outside our offices.

**Q49: What are the new arrangements for the Staff Room?**

The staff room is in limited use and we are encouraging all teachers to use their classrooms (or the classroom of a Colleague) for small break, lunch break, free classes etc. As time goes by, teachers will figure out, who is off at the same time, and so to ensure some level of social interaction teachers could have a socially distanced lunch in a colleague's classroom.

**Q50: What are the new arrangements for Homework?**

In order to ensure that all of our students are utilizing the Microsoft Teams facility, we are asking that all homework (and corrections) be assigned and submitted through Teams. To avoid teachers (and students) being overwhelmed with the volume of homework and corrections, we are asking teachers to assign homework for half of the classes that you see your group for i.e. if you have a group 4 times a week, you could assign homework on 2 occasions and if you had a group 5 times a week, you could assign homework twice one week and three times the following week.

**Q51: What are the new arrangements for Microsoft Teams?**

Can we ask all teachers to ensure that they create teams for all their class teaching groups and also for groups that they may take for SEN resource.

**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 all of your students on 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

### **\*\*\*\*\*What happens when there is a case of the virus confirmed in a classroom? Summary**

**Q: What happens if my child develops Covid-like symptoms in school? A:** If a child develops Covid-like symptoms, fever, shortness of breath or loss of taste and smell, while at school they should be immediately isolated in a designated area. The advice from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) is that this isolation area is somewhere with good ventilation, and preferably with an open outside window. Parents will be asked to collect their child as soon as possible. A staff member should wait with your child until you arrive.

**Q: What happens next? A:** Call your GP. Only a GP or doctor will determine if your child needs to go forward for testing- a school will not be able to make that referral. If the GP decides to send your child to get tested for Covid-19, any family members from the household should also be taken home from school. If a child is sent for Covid testing, the whole household must restrict its movements. Confirmed cases will be told by the HSE, and not the school.

**Q: What happens when there is a case of the virus confirmed in a classroom? Will the school have to close? A:** Public Health teams will work directly with schools, informing them of the confirmed case as necessary. These officials will also begin a 'risk assessment', to determine everyone who should get tested. Importantly, there is no 'blanket-policy' to test year groups or classes. The HPSC also has cautioned that a class won't automatically be deemed 'close-contacts', although it is likely, because each school setting is varied. All primary school children in a 'pod' will likely be deemed close contacts, while in secondary schools, close contacts will be determined by "proximity and interaction" as well as "class placement; classroom structure; common travel; social networks and friendship groups etc." Depending on initial results, or following the risk assessment, widespread swabbing within a class or a facility may be recommended under the HSE mass testing processes. Any decision to close, or partially close, a school will be evaluated by the public health teams.

**Q: My child has been deemed a close contact, what happens now? A:** You will be contacted directly by the HSE if your child has been deemed a close contact. If it is determined that your child should be sent to get tested for Covid-19, your whole household must restrict their movements.

**Q: Will I be told if there is a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 in my child's school? A:** Per the HPSC guidelines, schools do not need to inform parents that a pupil or teacher has been removed due to suspected symptoms. "Other pupils or staff do not need to be removed from class." As test results remain confidential as per doctor-patient relationship, no other child, parent, family, or teacher will be informed if a child in a school is found to have Covid-19. Confirmed cases of Covid-19 and close-contacts will be contacted directly by the HSE. However, parents should be advised at the point of testing that their child's result will likely need to be shared with their school if Covid-19 is detected, if it is deemed necessary for the safe management of any potential outbreak.