

Bridge Mills Galway Language Centre

The Bridge Mills

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Covid 19 Policy and Procedures

Host family Guidelines



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What is Corona virus?

The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has evolved rapidly and the Department of Health is leading the Government response to this national public health emergency and it, along with the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC), is providing up to date information and advice on its website.

The advice and guidance for Ireland takes account of guidance from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization, and decisions of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET). An Expert Advisory Group (EAG), which includes experts in Public Health Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Infection Prevention and Control and Virology, has also been established to provide expert scientific advice. Exposure to COVID-19 is a public health risk which affects all citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic also has implications for all workplaces as it can present a health risk to workers and other persons at a place of work. The reopening of the economy goes hand-in-hand with the provision of public health measures to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 as well as the existing occupational safety and health measures.

Managing the risk of spread in the workplace is important in relation to the health of staff but is also important as part of general efforts to control the spread and protect the most vulnerable.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Infection with the virus that causes COVID19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal.

It can take anything from 2 days up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear and can be similar to the symptoms of cold and flu.

Common symptoms of COVID19 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.
- Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to [HSE COVID19 symptoms](#).

How does COVID-19 Spread?

The virus that causes COVID19 disease is spread in fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person when they cough, sneeze, or speak.

The fluid or droplets land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these objects or surfaces and then bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose, or mouth by touching them with their contaminated hands.

COVID19 can also spread if droplets from an infected person land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them.

It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions. The period of survival may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature, or humidity of the environment). Studies indicate that it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning. Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces is essential. If disinfection is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.

While people are most likely to pass on the infection when they have symptoms, current information suggests that some infected people spread the virus to others prior to developing or displaying symptoms themselves.

Communication

Regarding accommodation for students, communication with the student and the host family is of major importance. Accommodation providers are a key part of student experience. Information sharing is crucial, especially when it comes to student medical issues or other related issues. Host families in high-risk groups such as elderly people or those with compromised immunity must inform the school before engaging in hosting students.

Student Showing Symptoms:

DO NOT ALLOW THE STUDENT TO COME TO SCHOOL

In the event of a student or host(s) showing symptoms or testing positive

- Please inform the school immediately (and the school will also do so with a family) We will coordinate with you and the Doctor on what to do. If out of hours call your GP or West Doc for guidance.

- The school will communicate with host agency (if one involved)
- Hosts family will need to isolate together with students (see isolation periods)

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- Host family will need to provide lunches
- Where hosts absolutely refuse to host in such a case, call 1850 24 1850 - government accommodation may be provided. <https://www2.hse.ie/services/coronavirus-self-isolation-facilities/?fbclid=IwAR3wyNZKc3jWUoqbCFpU123pRea0Z8PkCJvdj136AghhNzDi0a5BjTRYiC8>
- In cases where symptomatic individuals are accommodated in a host family , it is likely that everyone in the host family will need to self-isolate as a household .

Isolation Periods:

- Symptomatic individuals should isolate for seven days (or longer if the symptoms persist).
- Persons who live with a symptomatic individual (e.g. hosts, other students in home) should self-isolate for fourteen days as it can take fourteen days for symptoms to appear.
- If symptoms appear during self-isolation, the symptomatic individual should isolate for seven days from that point (even if this means self-isolating for longer than 14 days).

Cleanliness in the home:

- Please display the poster for students, regarding hand washing in your home – See [Appendix 1](#)
- Medical forms - there is an increased need for checking medical conditions of students and passing this information on to host families - especially where the student is in a high-risk category. Prior to arrival, a final check sheet should be completed by both the student and the host family (please sign and return the form to the school office)to ensure all parties are symptom free. – See [Appendix 2](#)
- Host families must provide single room (i.e. no twin share) options only in the short term - unless students are related or from the same household.
- Host families should review cleaning requirements – See [Appendix 3](#)

Managing Risks:

- Single en-suite rooms present a good option for social distancing if available
- However, much like in home shares, students will need to be equipped to manage the risks themselves. The biggest risk areas are likely to be common spaces (kitchens, social spaces, busy reception areas).

- Each guest should receive a 'Welcome and Safety Information' sheet explaining the COVID19 protocols in place – [Appendix 4](#) sample – Please edit as needed
- Provide hand sanitiser in rooms, at all entrance and exit points and at key locations throughout the property.
- Provide guidelines for students - e.g., kitchen rotas to reduce contact in kitchen areas.
- You must display appropriate COVID-19 signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures throughout your property. See [Appendix 1](#) and also <https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/>
- In general, the frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in all public spaces and recreational areas to at least twice daily.
- Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as table tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.
- Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washrooms. You could consider the occupancy level in your house.
- A log to be kept in each unit of anyone that entered the property each day
- All persons when cleaning to wear appropriate PPE
- No Students in the units whilst cleaning in process.
- Any student which shows signs of illness must isolate. Isolated individuals should avoid contact, as much as possible, with all people and animals, even within the same building.
- Students must refrain from coming to school if they are ill.
- Where possible each room should be left for 72 hours after the student leaves the area before use by someone else.

Appendix 1: Poster Hand Hygiene - Please display in your home for students to read

Clean your hands

Use soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser to clean your hands regularly.

Many hand sanitisers are alcohol based and highly flammable. Do not use alcohol based sanitiser near heat or a naked flame.

How to wash your hands with soap and water

1. Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap.
2. Rub your hands together palm to palm until the soap forms a lather.
3. Rub the back of one hand with your palm and fingers spread so you wash between fingers. Repeat with the other hand.
4. Interlock the top of your hands and rub your fingertips - this cleans your fingertips and knuckles.
5. Then finally grasp your thumb tightly and twist to make sure your thumbs are cleaned. Repeat with the other hand.
6. This should take at least 20 seconds.
7. Rinse your hands under running water.
8. Dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel.

If you have dry skin or a skin condition, apply moisturiser after washing your hands and at night.

Hand hygiene at home

When you're at home or not in hospital, make sure you clean your hands:

- after you use the toilet
- once you clean up after your pet
- before you prepare food, handle food or eat
- after touching raw meat
- after you use public transport
- when you get home after meeting lots of people

Cleaning your hands can help you avoid:

- colds and flu
- tummy bugs that cause diarrhoea, such as norovirus
- eye infections such as conjunctivitis
- superbugs such as MRSA and VRE

Do

Wash your hands properly and often.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.

Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Don't

Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

Do not share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups.

Appendix 2 – Host Family form – Pre- return to hosting

COVID19 Pre-return to Hosting Form	
<p>In order to implement COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures to Minimise risk to all, all families are required to complete the following questionnaire and return it to the school at least three days before starting to host students again. If you take a break from hosting then you will have to return an up to date copy of the form again. Please notify the school of any changes immediately relating to Covid 19 at any time.</p>	
Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness, or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?	Yes or No*
Have you been diagnosed with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?	Yes or No*
Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)?	Yes or No*
Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?	Yes or No*
Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?	Yes or No*
Are there any other circumstances relating to COVID19 not on this form that you may need to discuss to ensure your safe return such as concern for an underlying health condition, pregnancy or other	Yes or No
If yes, please indicate here:	
<p>I confirm to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID19</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>	
<p>I confirm that I am not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID19 test</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>	
<p><i>*If you answer Yes to any of the questions, you are strongly advised to follow the medical advice received or seek medical advice before returning to host family duties</i></p>	

Appendix 3- Disinfection of environments in nonhealthcare settings potentially contaminated with Covid 19

Evidence of environmental persistence Recent publications have evaluated the survival of SARS-CoV-2 (Covid 19) on different surfaces. According to van Doremalen et al., the environmental stability of SARS-CoV-2 is up to three hours in the air post-aerosolisation, up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel, albeit with significantly decreased titres.

Disinfectants:

Disinfectants are classified as biocidal products and are regulated by the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) (EU) No 528/2012 to ensure that risks are properly assessed before they are placed on the market in EU/EEA countries. In general, alcohol-based disinfectants (ethanol, propan-2-ol, propan1-ol) have been shown to significantly reduce infectivity of enveloped viruses like SARS-CoV-2, in concentrations of 70-80% with one minute exposure time . However, ethanol has not yet been approved under the BPR, so biocidal products based on ethanol are not authorised under the BPR but are available under transitional measures.

Biocidal products having virucidal activity and authorised under the BPR are efficacious against SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. This also applies to products used as hygienic hand and skin disinfectants, which state they have limited virucidal activity or activity only against enveloped viruses. For more information and for an indicative list of authorised disinfectant products, please visit the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) at <https://echa.europa.eu/covid-19>.

Cleaning Common Areas:

- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned as often as possible (at least daily and if possible more frequently). Examples of these surfaces are doorknobs and door bars, chairs and armrests, tabletops, light switches, handrails, water taps, elevator buttons, etc.
- The use of a neutral detergent for the cleaning of surfaces in general premises (i.e. not for premises where a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been) should be sufficient.
- The cleaning of toilets, bathroom sinks and sanitary facilities used by several people should be carefully performed. Consider the use of a disinfectant effective against viruses, such as 0.1% sodium hypochlorite, or other licensed viricidal products following the instructions for use provided by the manufacturer.

- Staff engaged in cleaning should wear PPE when performing cleaning activities. The use of the usual set of PPE (e.g. uniform – which is removed and frequently washed in warm water – and gloves) is enough for the protection when cleaning general premises.
- The cleaning material should be properly cleaned at the end of every cleaning section.
- Hand hygiene should be performed each time PPE such as gloves are removed.
- Waste material produced during the cleaning should be placed in the unsorted garbage.

Cleaning options after the presence of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

In the event a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been in a specific location this should be first well ventilated with fresh air for a minimum of 1 hour, and thereafter carefully cleaned with a neutral detergent, followed by decontamination of surfaces using a disinfectant effective against viruses.

- Cleaning procedure, use of disinfectants and textile cleaning should follow the instructions outlined in the section above for healthcare settings .
- Disposable, single-use cleaning equipment is suggested.
- Staff engaged in environmental cleaning in public spaces after a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 person was present should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as follows: – surgical mask – uniform and single-use plastic apron – gloves.
- For the cleaning of a household room where a COVID-19 patient was isolated, the same procedures apply. The cleaning person should wear gloves and a surgical mask.
- Hand hygiene should be performed each time after removing gloves or mask.
- Waste material produced during the cleaning should be placed in a separate bag, which can be disposed in the unsorted garbage. Cleaning options for all type of premises during the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://covid19.failteireland.ie/business-supports/business-reopening/bbs/guidelines-for-reopening/>

Appendix 4 – Additional Welcome and Safety Information for New Student Arrivals (SAMPLE)

We would like to welcome you to our home and to enjoy your stay

In line with Covid 19 requirements we would like you to be especially careful and obey hygiene requirements and respiratory etiquette

- Clean your hands regularly- Use soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser to clean your hands regularly. Many hand sanitisers are alcohol based and highly flammable. Do not use alcohol based sanitiser near heat or a naked flame.
- Please inform us immediately if you have any symptoms or suspect you have been in touch with someone who has Covid 19

Symptoms of COVID-19

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Common symptoms of COVID19 include:

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- *shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.*
- *Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.*

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to [HSE COVID19 symptoms](#).

- Do not bring any guests into the house
 - Keep a list of who you had contact with each day
 - Laundry – **Please inform your students of your home rules**
 - Meal- times – **Please inform your students of your home rules**
 - Cleaning rota – **Please inform your students of your home rules**
 - Limit where you go;
1. Only use public transport for essential journeys - walk or cycle instead, if you can
 2. Avoid places where you can't keep 2 metres apart from other people, where possible

3. [Wear face coverings](#) in public places, such as shops, and on public transport and in school at all times
 4. Wear a face covering when visiting older people or other vulnerable people - be sure to practice social distancing for their safety
 5. Meet people indoors or outdoors for social gatherings, but keep at least 2 metres apart
 6. Attend medical appointments, collect medicine or other health products
 7. Exercise outdoors or indoors in gyms and sports clubs while following public health advice
 8. Visit outdoor spaces, playgrounds and tourism sites, where you can keep at least 2 metres apart from other people
- When shopping you should:
 1. wear a face covering
 2. follow good hygiene practices
 3. practice social distancing
 4. minimise contact with people outside of your household

There is very little risk to you if you are just passing by someone briefly in a shop. But try to keep a distance of 2 metres as much as possible.

The [COVID Tracker app](#) can alert you if you have come into close contact with someone who later tested positive for the virus. Download the app from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#).

- How to use a cloth face covering properly

Do

Clean your hands properly before you put it on.

Practice using it so you are comfortable putting it on and taking it off.

Make sure it is made from a fabric you are comfortable wearing.

Cover your mouth and nose with it and make sure there are no gaps between your cloth face covering.

Tie it securely.

Carry unused face coverings in a sealable clean waterproof bag, for example, a ziplock.

Carry a second similar type bag to put used face coverings in.

Don't

Do not touch a face covering while wearing it - if you do, clean your hands properly.

Do not use a wet or soiled face covering.

Do not share face coverings.

Do not lower your face coverings to speak, eat and [smoke](#) or vape - if you need to uncover your nose or mouth take the face covering off and put it in a bag for used face coverings.

Do not discard face coverings in public places.