

Bridge Mills Galway Language Centre

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Covid 19 Policy and Procedures

Student Pre-Arrival 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 (NPHE). 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.

Insurance

Students must ensure they have adequate travel and health insurance before planning travel to study in Ireland

Communication

Communication with the student is of major importance. Information sharing is crucial , especially when it comes to student medical issues or other related issues. Students in high-risk groups such as elderly people or those with compromised immunity must inform the school before planning a trip.

In School

Respiratory Etiquette

In addition to hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene and etiquette is also necessary to prevent contamination

Students must:

- Adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Ensure they are familiar with and follow respiratory hygiene guidance
- Wear a face covering at all times in school – No face covering = No entry

Physical Distancing

The protocol advice is to maintain a distance of 2 meters from others at all times where possible. There are times when this may not be possible (In class a minimum distance of 1 m is allowed but you must wear a face covering at all times) and other alternative measures may have to be put in place to ensure safety . To follow are a list of measures to consider in order to ensure the minimum meter distance can be adhered to;

- Do not share desks
- Do not share pens , books , materials with others
- Staggered breaks will reduce student to student contact
- In class students sit in the same seats each day where possible
- no handshake policy
- queuing system – for exit from classroom, entry /exit
- floor stickers directing the flow of people (if appropriate)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is the last line of defence and cannot take the place of other preventative measures. Gloves are generally not required for infection prevention and control and are **not** a substitute for hand hygiene. Guidance on PPE is subject to change and for COVID19, and we will check public health advice.

Students must wear a face mask at all times inside and outside the classroom

What is Contact Tracing?

Last updated: 26 May 2020 at 4.40pm, Source [Contact tracing - HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie/en-gb/health-topics/topics/covid19/contact-tracing)

If a person tests positive for coronavirus they will be asked about other people they have been in close contact with. A person may also get a call from a contact tracer if is likely that they have coronavirus but have not yet had a test.

This is 'contact tracing'. The people who do this work are 'contact tracers'.

Why is contact tracing needed?

Contact tracing identifies the people who need to contact be contacted. For example, family members, friends, colleagues, or fellow travellers.

Contact tracing is carried out to determine who else is at risk of catching the virus.

Contact tracers will give advice on what to do if a person develop symptoms. This is done to try to reduce the spread of coronavirus in the community.

Keeping a Contact Log:

The HSE offer as a guide that spending more than 15 minutes of face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person in any setting is considered to be a close contact.

The protocol states that keeping a log of close working is a requirement and may be called upon for the purposes of contact tracing.

Teachers will work in pods (1 Class = 1 pod) where possible so each pod will have only one teacher, whenever possible, and remain isolated from other pods in the school

Logs will be recorded for the purposes of contact tracing and will not be shared with anybody except in providing assistance to HSE contact tracers.

Students are encouraged to stay in class and not cross over with. Lateness will not be allowed nor early leaving as per timetable schedule.

Temperature Testing

As yet there is no public health advice directing employers to carry out temperature checks. This may change in the future depending on any developments. Public health advice in relation to Covid-19 is available on the Gov.ie website, access the page [here](#). The Authority continues to update their webpages ([linked here](#)) on Covid-19 with up to date information.

We recommend all students take their own temperature before coming to school each day and stay home if they have a high temperature or suspect they may be sick.

Pre-Arrival Declaration

Medical forms - there is an increased need for checking medical conditions of students and passing this information on to host families or those who need to know this information. Prior to arrival, a final check sheet should be completed by the student - please sign and return the form to the school office). – See [Appendix 2](#)

Student Showing Symptoms

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

- Please inform the school immediately

- The school will communicate with host agency (if one involved)
- Students will need to isolate (see isolation periods)
- Where host families cannot 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).

Managing Risks

- Single en-suite rooms present a good option for social distancing if possible for student booking
- 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 student should receive from the family, a ‘Welcome and Safety Information’ sheet explaining the COVID19 protocols in place.
- Follow good hand hygiene – [Appendix 1](#)
- 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
 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

Shopping

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

Students must wear a face covering in school at all times

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.

Public transport

- If using public transport, staff should engage in regular hand hygiene practice i.e. use of alcohol based hand sanitiser and maintain the recommended social distance (2m/ 6.5 ft) away from other passengers.
- Be conscious of body positioning on public transport.
 - Where possible use seats facing the same direction.
 - If standing, locate yourself so that distance away for a passenger(s) can be maintained as recommended and such that you are not directly facing a passenger in the event that they sneeze or cough.
- Where possible avoid using your hands to open/close doors, e.g. use elbows, shoulders.
- Where surfaces, handles, buttons have to be used ensure that you carry out hand hygiene afterwards (by using an alcohol based sanitiser or hand washing with soap).
- Carry out hand hygiene upon reaching your destination.

Private transport

- If using own transport staff should travel independently. Carpooling is not advised.
- Ensure that the vehicle is road worthy with adequate fuel to complete the journey and avoid unnecessary stops.
- Carry out hand hygiene before and after driving the vehicle.
- See list of cleaning considerations above under Shared Vehicles for additional measures to be taken to keep private vehicles clean and planning a journey.

International travel

- Avoid all non-essential travel to other countries post arrival.
- [Read the latest COVID-19 Travel Advisory travel information from the Department of Foreign Affairs.](#)
- The Department of Foreign Affairs has an advice centre for coronavirus-related travel queries. Phone [01 613 1733](tel:016131733)
- The HSE also has travel advice available at - [HSE Travel advice regarding COVID19](#)

Mental Health and Well being

- Measures are being taken to address wellbeing
- Public health advice from the HSE and other sources as appropriate are available – see [Appendix 3.](#)

Appendix 1: Hand Hygiene

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 — Pre- Arrival Declaration

COVID19 Student Declaration	
In order to implement COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures to Minimise risk to all, all students are required to complete the following questionnaire and return it to the school at least three days before arrival. Please notify the school of any changes immediately relating to Covid 19 at any time.	
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:	
I confirm to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID19	
Signed:	
Date:	
I confirm that I am not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID19 test	
Signed:	
Date:	
<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 considering travel.</i>	

[Appendix 3: Mental Health Services](#)

Mental Health Ireland - Minding our Mental Health during COVID-19

Mental Health Ireland has lots of great resources on its website to help get through this challenging time. It includes great information on supporting ourselves, supporting others, tips and coping strategies and also service and support lines.

[Mental Health Ireland- Supporting Ourselves](#)

**HSE Mental Health Text Support – Just Launched June 16 2020

A new text based mental health service funded by the HSE has been launched.....

50808 is a Free text service available 24/7 to provide everything from a calming chat to immediate support for people going through a mental health or emotional crisis. Fully trained Crisis Volunteers are available 24/7 for anonymous, supportive text conversations. Text TALK to 50808 to begin

[In This Together](#) – Campaign launched by the Irish Government with tips on how you can look after your **mental wellbeing, stay active** and **stay connected**

[Samaritans](#) - Round the clock support for people in need; whether your situation is urgent or you just need someone to talk to. You can also contact them if you are worried about a friend and you don't have to be over 18. Calls are confidential and you don't have to give personal details if you don't want to. Call 116 123.

[Aware](#)- A nationwide organization that provides education, information and support for people dealing with depression or bipolar disorder in Ireland. They provide emotional and practical support through their helpline, which is open Monday to Sunday from 10am to 10pm.

[Grow](#) is a mental health organization in Ireland. It helps people who have suffered or are suffering from mental health problems.

[Pieta House](#) is a non-profit organization providing treatment for those experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harm. They also operate the Suicide Bereavement Counselling centers to provide free counselling, therapy and support to those who have been affected by suicide.

Appendix 4: Useful References

People at high risk <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>

Health and Safety Authority <https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/>

Failte Ireland Safety Charter <https://www.failteireland.ie/apply-covid-19-safety-charter.aspx>

Irish Council for International Students <https://www.internationalstudents.ie/>

Bridge Mills Galway Language Centre <http://www.galwaylanguage.com/>

Appendix 5: Our Health & Safety Commitments

The health and safety of our students and staff is, and always has been, our top priority. And as a result of COVID-19, we have been working hard planning for our future. We've been looking at ways to adapt our service to ensure that our students and staff are kept safe, but can still have the best possible experience.

Online check-in.



To minimise the time spent checking in/requesting information etc. at reception, all students are requested to send queries and requests via email (info@galwaylanguage.com) or phone 00353 (0) 91 566468 .

Allocated arrival slots.



We will wherever possible stage breaks and / or class start and finish times to allow for staggered classtimes. This will ensure social distancing measures are maintained and will help to reduce queues and overcrowding.

Hand cleaning facilities.



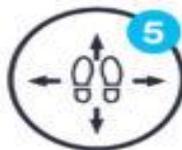
Anti-bacterial hand sanitiser stations have been placed at reception and on the first and second floors.

Enhanced cleaning protocols.



In communal spaces, we have added to our already rigorous cleaning protocols, paying close attention to high use touch points such as door handles, handrails and lift controls. This cleaning is also done with increased frequency.

On-site signage.



We have installed lots of new instructional signage in our building to help people keep a safe distance and to remind people to follow the current guidelines.

**Protective screens
at reception.**



Protective screens have been installed at reception to provide an extra level of precaution for both students and staff.

**Social distancing
measures.**



Maximum numbers of people in classrooms, shared toilets and other communal spaces may be restricted to allow more space for social distancing.

More Cleaning



All rooms are cleaned regularly.

Must wear a face mask



To encourage a high standard of hygiene, every student must use a face mask or covering at all times in school.

Self-isolation support.



Should any students arriving need to self-isolate, we will ensure the appropriate support is provided to them during the isolation period.

Trained staff.



All staff have undertaken specific COVID-19 awareness training. This ensures that they have a comprehensive understanding of coronavirus, its symptoms and how to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

Health & safety accreditation.



In accordance with Health and Safety accreditation, we are monitoring our policies, processes and procedures to ensure that we are working to the latest Government Guidance and following best practice.