

New School Day Guidance - Information for Parents/Guardians Academic Year 2021/2022

Welcome to our New School Year

At St Colman's College the health and wellbeing of everyone in our school community is of the highest importance to us.

We have risk assessed our school day to ensure that we are taking all the reasonable steps possible to protect our students and staff from coronavirus (COVID-19)

We have looked at:

- work activity or situations that might cause transmission of the virus
- who could be at risk
- how likely it is that someone could be exposed
- removing the activity or situation, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

This guidance sets out our approach to School life in the new academic year 2021/2022.

Ongoing support from our entire College Community

Everyone in our College Community has a part to play in managing the spread of COVID-19.

St Colman's College will:

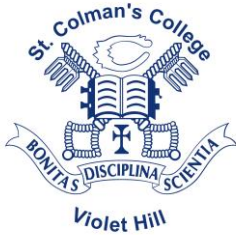
- promote our Positive Behaviour Policy, particularly in relation to COVID-19 related incidents
- carry out inductions on the New School Day with all students at the beginning of the School Year
- continue to keep Parents/Guardians updated on changes to COVID-19 measures throughout the School Year
- send updates via Groupcall, SIMS Parent App, the College App and the school website

Students will:

- follow the normal school timetable
- follow the school rules and COVID-19 rules regarding handwashing, hygiene, social distancing, bubbles, arrival, departure and moving around school to keep everyone in our College Community safe

Parents/Guardians will:

- Promote compliance with COVID-19 guidance: in particular, compliance in our school and on both public transport and dedicated school transport and explaining the importance of doing so to your child.
- ensure compliance with PHA guidance of any child isolating due to:
 - o your child having COVID-19 symptoms, in which case Parents/Guardians should book a PCR test and support the child to isolate following PHA protocols for self-isolation.



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- your child being identified as a close contact, either as a household member of a symptomatic or confirmed case, or as a close contact of a case not in their household.
- your child having returned to Northern Ireland from another country and isolating in line with NI Direct Travel advice and regulations

This guide will give you further information on the New School Day at St Colman's College, and we encourage you to speak with your child about the guidance. We will continue to keep you updated throughout the school year as developments arise, and your child's form teacher is on hand should you have any queries.

If displaying symptoms

Anyone displaying any of the key COVID-19 symptoms must not attend school. They should stay at home, book a test through the PHA Website and follow the PHA Guidelines. (see Identification and Response to Positive cases - COVID-19 section for more information)

Social Distancing

Social distancing remains a key aspect of measures to be taken in schools to mitigate the risks of virus transmission.

The Executive decided that from 16 August, schools are no longer required to operate a system of formal protective bubbles. At St Colman's College, we have decided to continue with protective bubbles to support effective contact tracing to maintain a cautious and measured approach that still seeks to maximise the time where students are within a consistent group of students. Those within the protective bubble will not have to socially distance from each other.

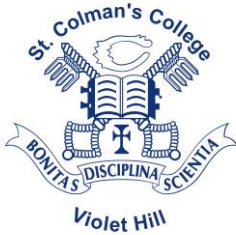
Social distancing applies to staff, students, Parents/Guardians (and any others who may attend the school) and any external contractors or delivery drivers. Social distancing of 2 metres remains in place between adults and as far as possible between adults and students, and it applies across all areas of the school grounds, both indoors and outdoors.

St Colman's College will:

- implement as much social distancing as is practical where physical capacity and curriculum delivery permit
- provide specific areas for designated year groups to effectively remain in their bubbles
- assign seating in classrooms that support social distancing
- provide screens, additional cleaning measures and hand washing routines where social distancing is not possible
- open the canteen at breakfast and lunch times only (not at break times), along with other measures, to manage the large gathering of students at any one time

Students will

- wear a coloured badge on their blazer to represent a specific year group
- move around outdoors where possible and use a face covering when moving indoors



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- remain with a consistent group of students where possible
 - stay within allocated areas at lunch and break times
 - maintain a 2m distance from other students and staff outside of their protective bubble

Space Utilisation

All classrooms have been arranged to minimise the risk of transmission and infection. Seating has been spaced as widely as possible, and students face to the front of the classroom as much as possible to minimise risks of spread and transmission of COVID-19.

Indoor and Outdoor Gatherings

Schools are able to host both outdoor and indoor gatherings on the same basis as the Executive's current guidance for non-domestic outdoor and indoor gatherings in other sectors and will be subject to Risk Assessment which will determine maximum numbers, venue, mitigating measures to be taken etc.

This includes School assemblies, sports events, music performances, excursions. We will keep you informed of gatherings throughout the School Year.

Use of Outdoor Spaces

Public health advice is that outdoor environments can limit transmission, as well as more easily allowing for appropriate social distancing between students and staff, and St Colman's College will aim to maximise the use of outdoors as applicable.

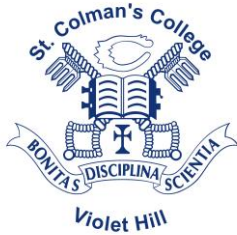
Movement throughout the school

The Executive's decision to no longer require the use of bubbles in schools does not affect the benefits of close interactions with others being minimised wherever possible.

While close interactions with others should be avoided wherever possible, brief interactions within social distancing guidance, such as limited numbers of people passing each other in corridors where one way systems are not possible or, walking through learning spaces to go to the toilet (for example), are considered low risk and are permissible.

St Colman's College will:

- use floor markings in relevant spaces to help direct effectively
- continue to encourage all staff and students to wear face coverings as they move through the school



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- provide signage throughout the building that brings awareness to social distancing and keeping 2 m apart
 - restrict and manage the movement of visitors to the school
 - encourage the use of external areas to move between parts of the building, reducing the density of use of internal areas

Students will:

- wear face coverings as they move through the school
- use the specified Senior and Junior entrances to the school

Parents/Guardians will:

- use the Drop off and pick up point in place at the Sports Pavilion
- enter the school building via reception only

Use of Face Coverings

COVID-19 usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing hands first.

The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of COVID-19 droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others while also providing some protection to the wearer.

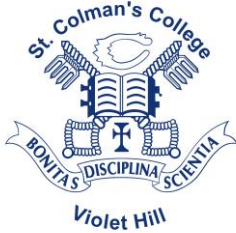
Because face coverings are mainly intended to protect others, not the wearer from COVID-19, they are not a replacement for social distancing and regular hand washing. The wearing of a face covering will not automatically exempt an individual from being identified as a close contact by the PHA's Contact Tracing Service.

Safe wearing of a face covering:

- ensure that you clean hands before and after touching your face covering – this includes to remove or put them on
- ensure that your face covering is stored safely - in individual, sealable plastic bags between use
- where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and should be replaced carefully
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St Colman's College will:

- have stocks of face coverings available should anyone forget their face covering; these are available from the SWO
- continue to provide signage to encourage the wearing of face coverings
- monitor to ensure that face coverings are worn



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- encourage the use of large spaces such as drama or large hall, where face covering rules are relaxed, and where it is possible to do so
 - encourage staff to maintain a 2m social distance, or use protective screens where face covering rules are relaxed
 - require face coverings where a 2m distance cannot be maintained indoors or outdoors

Students will:

- take a face covering to school each day
- follow guidance on the safe wearing of a face covering
- dispose of them effectively
- wear a face covering at all times when inside school buildings, including classrooms, corridors and confined communal spaces such as toilet areas (unless a medical note has been provided to your Form Teacher or SWO)
- wear a face covering on all public transport (unless a medical note has been provided to your Form Teacher or SWO)

Parents/Guardians will:

- ensure their child has access to and understands the importance of wearing a face covering where it is appropriate for them to do so and disposing of it appropriately
- for relevant children, provide the College with a medical note with respect to exemptions.

Hygiene Measures

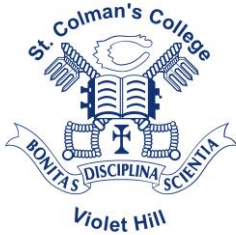
Personal hand and respiratory hygiene measures remain a fundamental aspect of preventing transmission of the virus.

St Colman's College will:

- provide hand sanitiser at key areas at entry and exit points throughout the school
- continue to provide signage to remind everyone to wash hands
- ensure adequate handwashing facilities are accessible to all students
- continue to monitor to ensure hygiene measures are followed
- continue to ensure that handwashing protocols on arrival to school and at stages through the day are being followed
- provide hand sanitiser, wipes and tissues in all classrooms
- collect waste regularly
- carry out individual risk assessments and put in place measures to support clinical/ extremely clinical vulnerable students

Students will:

- wash their hands upon arrival at school each day
- take their own hand sanitiser, tissues and face covering to school each day
- continue to regularly wash their hands throughout the day
- avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose
- cover the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping and blowing the nose.



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Parents/Guardians will:

- ensure their child has access to and understands the importance of hand sanitising
- keep the College fully informed about any additional requirements or issues which impact on provision for their child.

Ventilation

Public health advice is that the virus that causes COVID-19 is spread through very small aerosols and droplets released in exhaled breath. These aerosols can be carried in the air and could cause infection if they are inhaled. The risk of virus transmission through aerosols and airborne particles is lower in a well ventilated space where fresh air is able to flow.

St Colman's College will:

- mitigate this risk by maximising the ventilation of all indoor spaces as much as is practicable
- encourage school activities to take place outdoors as applicable
- ensure good ventilation and increase natural ventilation by keeping windows open, and follow a range of ventilation measures depending on different climates

Catering

St Colman's College will:

- provide Breakfast club to enable Students to have access to a nutritious breakfast, alongside lunch service (the canteen will be closed at break time, students can purchase food from the dining room before 9am)
- continue with our Cashless system which mitigates risk associated with virus transmission and cash handling
- use protective bubbles to ensure that Students remain in consistent groups wherever possible to aid effective contact tracing
- extend lunchtimes with separate year groups
- use designated zones that promote social distancing and protective bubbles
- ensure drinking water is available to all students throughout the day

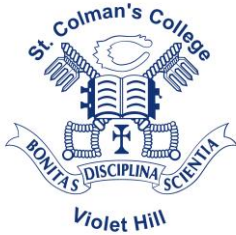
School Uniform

St Colman's College will:

- make a Uniform Swap available for items of school uniform which were unworn/less-worn. Please contact the College for more information

Students will:

- wear their full school uniform to school
- wear their PE uniform on a PE day and will consist of VHC Tracksuit bottoms and VHC hoodie/ ½ zip top



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Curriculum Delivery

Students must attend school (except for those presenting extreme circumstances and only with verified reasons)

St Colman's College will:

- assess the needs of students where extreme or verified reasons are presented which prevents attendance at school, and make arrangements for the best learning approach to be implemented
- risk assess and put mitigating measures in place for extra-curricular activities and practical curriculum delivery

Students will:

- wear their PE uniform on a PE day and will consist of VHC Tracksuit bottoms and VHC hoodie/ ½ zip top to minimise the need for changing

Parents will:

- inform the Year Head/ Form Teacher of any absences in line with COVID-19 and normal absence recording protocol

School Transport

St Colman's College will:

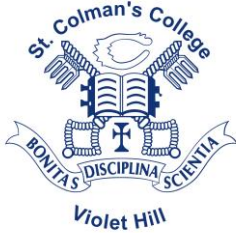
- ensure supervision is in place to ensure social distancing prior to boarding transport and instruct students in terms of the regulations on a regular basis.

Students will:

- continue to consider alternative methods of travel and in particular active travel such as walking and cycling which will bring a range of health benefits as part of a healthier lifestyle
- wear a face covering on both public transport and school transport services
- adhere to good hand and respiratory hygiene practices
- not eat or drink on board unless it is for a medical reason.
- Senior students driving to school must not transport any other student who is not a member of his family

Parents/Guardians will:

- ensure their child knows that if they become aware of COVID-19 symptoms while on board a vehicle, they should inform the transport driver or escort (if there is one on board their vehicle) and school staff immediately upon arrival at school
- ensure their child cleans their hands before they leave their home



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Identification and Response to Positive Cases

Asymptomatic Testing

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing is a programme that we have implemented in St Colman's College. It aims to identify students and staff who are infected but do not realise it so they can be advised to isolate so reducing the risk of them unwittingly spreading infection in the school and elsewhere.

Testing is voluntary and no pupil should be tested unless informed consent has been given by the child's parent or guardian, or the child if they are over 16, and the child is willing to be tested.

Anyone with symptoms (even if they have had a negative LFD test result) should still self-isolate immediately according to PHA guidelines

Symptoms to look out for

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); OR
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); OR
- a loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

Please then follow the PHA Guidance;

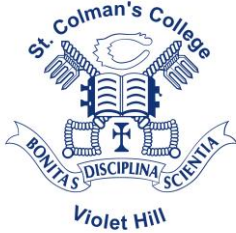
For reference the guidance is:
(as at 27August 2021)

If you take any symptoms at School

Students will go straight to the SWO who will contact home.

If anyone displays symptoms

If anyone displays symptoms of COVID-19, they, and any members of their household within that school setting, must be sent home and advised to follow the PHA Guidance for households with a possible COVID-19 infection.



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Symptomatic

- If at any point you become symptomatic, you should begin to self-isolate and book a PCR Test.
- If positive you should not leave your home for 10 days from when your symptoms started.

(ALL close contacts are advised to avoid visiting hospitals or care homes in the 10 days following their contact with a confirmed case and should also minimise contact with people who would be at greater risk if they contracted coronavirus, such as the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable)

Positive PCR Test

- Students who are close contacts but have already had a positive test result in 90 days, and have no new symptoms do not need to arrange a PCR test or self-isolate
- If the PCR test is positive they should self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if they have no symptoms, for 10 days from the date of testing. Their household should also self-isolate unless they meet the PHA exemptions

Negative PCR Test

- If the test is negative, they can return to school with advice to take another test on Day 8. However, if a student goes on to develop new symptoms they should stay at home, self-isolate and book another PCR test.

St Colman's College will:

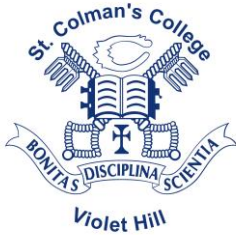
- keep a full record of such actions and request that a parent, carer, or guardian record their acknowledgement of this action

Definition of Close Contact in 2021/2022 Academic Year

(in school settings as at August 2021)

In the context of a case in a school, a close contact is anyone who has been close to a confirmed case of COVID-19 from 2 full days before the person was symptomatic* to 10 days after the onset of symptoms (i.e. the infectious period) and fulfils any of the following:

- lives in the same household
- has been within one metre and had face-to-face contact (including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation)
- skin-to-skin contact
- been within 2 metres of someone for more than 15 minutes (**either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day**)



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- has travelled in a small vehicle with the case
 - travelled in a large vehicle / plane near the case

An interaction through a Perspex (or equivalent) screen with the person who has COVID-19 is not usually considered to be a contact, as long as there has been no other contact such as those in the list above.

*If the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 did not have symptoms, then their infectious period is counted from 2 days before their test was taken to 10 days after their test was taken.

Cold/Flu Symptoms

if a child does not have symptoms of COVID-19 but has other flu or cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and do not need to self-isolate. The child can go to school if fit to do so.

Contact us

If you have any queries, please email these to info@stcolmans.org.uk or phone the College Reception on 02830262451