

“Back to school again - Tell me something I don’t know.”

1. Foreign travel is *not* a matter for schools to investigate.

Parents are personally responsible for compliance with public health advice and should be referred to the [government advice on international travel](#). While staff have to complete a Return to Work Form (available at Appendix 2 of the [updated Covid-19-Response Plan for primary and special schools](#)), they also have personal responsibility for compliance with public health advice in relation to foreign travel and should be referred to the [government advice on international travel](#).

2. A board meeting is *not required* before school opens.

It is not necessary for a board to adopt the [updated Covid-19-Response Plan for primary and special schools](#) before school opens. This can be read by the principal and chair and adopted by the board at the next meeting. Board meetings may still be held of course, remotely where possible, with the exception of the one meeting per term required for child protection.

3. A CO2 Monitor is *not required* for every classroom.

While monitors are being sent out to schools this week and next week, there may not be sufficient for every classroom. The purpose of these is to monitor ventilation in classrooms at certain times with a view to ensuring that the best ventilation practices are in operation. This can be monitored in different classes at different times without difficulty, as monitors are portable and easy to install. If a school is having difficulty with ventilation, the Department’s Buildings Unit should be contacted. The schools CO2 suppliers can be contacted by email at CO2@lennox.ie or by phoning 01-2248675.

4. The Department of Education do *not* require “Return to Educational Facility” Forms to be completed by parents.

There is no requirement for these forms to be completed by parents and no entitlement to refuse entry to school to children who have not completed these forms. Schools may of course still request parents to fill in these forms as an additional precaution.

5. Visitors to the school should still be kept to a minimum.

It is still a matter for individual boards to decide whether coaches, music teachers or any other external personnel (including TY students) can or should be accommodated safely in their particular school setting. School student placements are considered an essential part of the operation of schools and should be facilitated where possible.

Contact Logs are still required to be completed by all visitors.

6. Funding for enhanced cleaning, sanitisers and PPE will be continued for the next school term.

Additional cleaning hours will continue to be paid for by the Department for the next school term as will funding for sanitisers and PPE. A Circular is due to issue on this shortly .

7. Staff meetings should continue to be conducted with caution.

Tempting as it is to bring everybody together at the start of the year, this is still not a possibility in many schools due to lack of space. The COVID-19 Response Plan requires staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate social distancing .

8. Pregnant and Very High Risk Staff *must* be reviewed by Medmark

[Circular 0042/2021](#) and [DE letter to schools dated 12th August 2021](#) set out the situation regarding staff who were previously regarded as Very High Risk and pregnant staff. These staff should engage with Medmark before returning to school .They should complete the OHS risk assessment on

<https://www.medmark.ie/teachersna> which now also caters for ancillary staff.

Schools should also conduct a risk assessment for pregnant staff- see [Template Risk-Assessment-for-Pregnant-Employees](#)

9. Everything else continues as per last term !

For **children**- this means pods, bubbles, handwashing, hand sanitisers, teachers wearing masks, social distancing and going home, if they have symptoms of COVID-19.

For **parents** – this means communicating with the school by telephone or email, not congregating outside the school, possible staggered start and finish times , keeping symptomatic children at home and collecting children who develop symptoms of COVID-19 .

For **staff**- this means staggered staffroom breaks, handwashing and sanitising routines, wearing masks, vigilance in relation to children exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and maintaining pods and bubbles.

10 . For you ... Help is at hand !

Cur glaoch orainn at CPSMA ar [01-6292462](tel:01-6292462) nó scríobh chugainn ar info@cpsma.ie.

We would be delighted to assist with any queries you may have at this time . Best of luck next week.

CPSMA Team