



10 March 2020

Dear Principal,

You will be aware that Ireland now has twenty four confirmed cases of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) in Ireland.

You will also be aware that as part of the contact tracing process a number of schools have been asked to close for 14 days in order to prevent the possible spread of infection.

The closing of these schools was a decision made on public health grounds after a thorough risk assessment deemed it appropriate. All other schools will remain open.

Given that Covid-19 is a new disease it is understandable that its emergence may give rise to anxiety and fear. These factors can also give rise to harmful stereotypes.

It is essential that any decisions regarding responses to Covid-19 are proportionate, necessary and based on *specific* public health advice. **No other response is appropriate.**

Please be assured that public health professionals will contact you if there is any action to be taken in relation to your school and students. You should not take unilateral action.

To that end, I urge you to ensure your contact details for parents are up to date, and that you are in a position to share contact details with public health authorities carrying out contact tracing, if requested, as facilitated by GDPR regulations in the event of a public health emergency.

We must continue to focus on ensuring that everyone is informed and knows what to do in the event they develop symptoms.

The general public should continue to follow HSE.ie and Gov.ie/health for accurate and informative information regarding Covid-19, its symptoms and the steps that the public can take to protect themselves.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and assistance in communicating to parents and pupils as this situation continues to evolve, both nationally and internationally.

Both the Department of Health and the Department of Education and Skills continue to collaborate in Ireland's response to Covid-19.

Yours,

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer
Department of Health

cc: Seán Ó Foghlú,
Secretary General
Department of Education & Skills