

MONASTERY NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Wednesday 1 December 2021

Re: Department of Education directive and letter to Parents from CMO

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I would like to thank parents for their full support and cooperation with our *Covid Response Plan* and school control measures throughout this pandemic. Your support has ensured the safety of our school community and as a result we have not experienced any significant outbreaks of covid infection in our school to date.

Last night the Department of Education and the Chief Medical Officer directed parents and primary schools to begin the mandatory wearing of masks / face coverings for all pupils in 3rd to 6th classes.

This directive will become mandatory in our school for these pupils from next Monday December 6th 2021 thereby allowing parents time to prepare for this new Covid control measure.

Please read the following Department of Education information;

Face coverings in Primary schools

NPHET has recommended the wearing of face masks/coverings by children aged nine years and above on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings as already required for children aged 13 years and over. They have also recommended that this is introduced for children in 3rd class and above in primary schools. They have advised that this measure is being introduced on a temporary basis and is subject to review in mid-February 2022.

Guidance on face masks/coverings in Primary schools

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

Wearing of face masks/coverings

Pupils from third class and up in primary schools are required to wear a face mask/covering. The exemptions to this are set out overleaf.

Face masks/coverings

Face masks/coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face mask/covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Face masks/coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

Face masks/coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.

Visors

Face masks/coverings are more effective than visors. In the limited circumstances where a face mask/covering cannot be worn clear visors must be considered.

Exemptions

A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school on behalf of, any person (pupil) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:

- *any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions*
- *any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance*
- *any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example pupils with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.*

In circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided that person (staff or pupil) will be refused entry to the school.

How will this operate in Monastery NS?

- **From Monday December 6th pupils in 3rd to 6th class will be required to wear a mask / face covering before they enter the school building each day.**
- Masks / face coverings will be removed at all break times / ventilation breaks / PE lessons outside.
- Your son's face mask / covering should be stored in a zip lock bag, with his name on it, in his school bag when not in use.
- In order that your son gets used to wearing a face mask / covering his teacher will take occasional comfort breaks outside where it can be removed.
- Medical masks / face coverings should be replaced each day.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.

It is hoped that this additional Covid control measure will prevent the spread of infection in both our school and our community.

I request that you also read carefully the enclosed **letter to Parents / Guardians from the Chief Medical Officer** and the **guide for parents and children 3rd to 6th class** for the effective use of face masks/coverings.

I appreciate greatly your compliance with all our measures to date and look forward to your continued support of our school during this crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Jim McGee, Principal.