

We have worked hard to make sure we provide a safe study environment for both students and staff. The health and safety of our students and staff is our utmost priority. Please read the following information carefully so we can protect ourselves and each other.

What is Coronavirus?

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.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 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 COVID-19 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 COVID-19 symptoms](#).

How does COVID-19 Spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 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.

COVID-19 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.

Translated HSE Covid-19 Information

You can find translated Covid-19 information on the [HSE website](#).

Covid-19 Level Alert System in Ireland / Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19

The Irish government has published a strategy to reduce the spread of Covid-19 while allowing businesses and society to continue as normally as possible. The strategy has a **5 level alert system**, with Level 1 being the least serious (few cases of Covid-19) and Level 5 being the most serious (many cases of Covid-19).

You can find detailed explanations of each level and the respective restrictions [here](#).

Please familiarise yourself with the current restrictions in place and **please follow the [government guidelines!](#)**

If, at any point, there are temporary regional or national lockdowns, it's possible that classes may have to move online. In that event, the online classes

- will be conducted via the video meeting software 'Zoom',
- will follow a similar format as our General English classes,
- will be of same total duration and lesson length (15 hours of live online classes per week),
- will be divided by level (which means you will continue studying in your level)
- will have a maximum of 15 students per class,
- will be live interactive classes, taught by the same experienced and fully qualified teachers,
- will have a collaborative and task based approach, focusing on speaking and language production,
- will be supplemented by a Learning Management System (LMS).

Covid-19 School Safety Protocols

Please familiarise yourself with the [Covid-19 School Safety Protocols](#). All relevant documentation can be found at <https://www.castleforbescollege.com/covid-19/> .

Please read these carefully and thoroughly.

Important takeaways:

- Face masks are mandatory inside the school building at all times. Social distancing measures are in place inside the school building which must be followed.
- If you feel unwell or show any symptoms of Covid-19, you must stay at home and inform the school.
- Regularly wash and disinfect your hands.

Covid-19 Self-Declaration Form

Before you go to the school you must complete the [Covid-19 Self-Declaration Form](#) with your contact information. If you don't complete this form we cannot let you enter the school. Should you have any questions or difficulties completing the form please contact us.

Staggered Class Times

To avoid crowding of students on arrival and departure, class times will be staggered. This means you will either start your class at **a set time between 08.30 and 09.30 if you have a morning course, or between 13.00 and 1400 for afternoon courses** . **You will be informed of your class time in advance.** You must arrive on time for the start of your class. If you arrive 15 minutes earlier or 15 minutes late you will not be allowed to enter.

Attendance

Students are requested and strongly encouraged to attend 100% of classes to ensure successful academic outcomes in their studies.

If you miss a whole week without giving the school prior notice, you must resubmit the [Covid-19 Self-Declaration Form](#). We advise you to attend all classes or to inform the school if you cannot attend or if you are not feeling well.

Travelling abroad / Holidays

If you are leaving and returning to Ireland during your course (e.g. you are going on holidays) you must inform the school of your travel plans and flight details. Depending on where you are going you may have to restrict your movements for 14 days when you return to Ireland and will not be able to join the face-to-face classes during that time. There will be no online component to make up for these classes. The advice is **not** to travel outside Ireland at the moment. Before returning to school after holidays you must re-submit the [Covid-19 Self-Declaration Form](#).

COVID Tracker Mobile App

We strongly encourage everyone to download and use the official COVID Tracker mobile app. It is a free app which you can download here: <https://covidtracker.gov.ie/>

The goal of the COVID Tracker app is to help to protect each other and to slow the spread of coronavirus in Ireland. The app will:

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus,
- advise you on what to do to protect yourself and others, and
- alert other app users that you were in close contact with, if you test positive for coronavirus.