Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you may have heard in the media over the past 24 hours, there have been changes made by the HSE to the Covid-19 testing and contact tracing system for primary school children. Today, the school received information from the HSE as to what exactly the new system will look like and we would like to take some time today to explain this to you.

Firstly, these changes take effect on **Monday next, September 27th**.

This means that almost every primary school child in the country can attend school this coming Monday. There are three exceptions:

* A child who is currently isolating because he/she was diagnosed with Covid-19.
* A child with any symptoms of Covid-19.
* A child who is restricting his/her movements because they have an immediate family member who tested positive for Covid-19.

**Going forward, what does this mean for your child, who attends St. Brigid’s?**

1. If your child **has symptoms** of Covid-19, they should **not** attend school. They should immediately self-isolate, should not socialise and you should contact your GP and/or arrange a test for Covid-19. **This advice has not changed.**
2. If your child has been in close contact, in a **household setting**, with a confirmed case of Covid-19, they should **not** attend school. They will be officially identified as a close contact by the HSE Contact Tracing Team, will have to isolate and will have to go through the usual testing process through the HSE. **Household setting** means that someone has tested positive in the child’s own household or in any household where he has spent the night. (For example, at a sleepover with friends or family.)
3. If your child has been in close contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19 in an **educational or social setting**, they will no longer be identified as an official close contact. They will not have to restrict their movements. They can **attend school** and we will not require a test. However, if they show symptoms, you should refer to point 1 above and ensure your child is tested. This means that children can no longer be identified as close contacts through attendance at school, sports clubs, birthday parties etc.

What does this mean for our school?

* All current infection prevention and control measures are to remain in place in schools, according to the Department of Education. This means that we will continue with staggered start and finish times, pod and bubble structures etc.
* We will still contact you regularly to keep you up to date with these measures and offer our latest advice and guidance.
* Should there be a positive test result in your child’s class, we will inform you of this and ask parents and staff to look out for symptoms in the children to make sure we catch any other cases as soon as they happen. However, in such a case, your child can attend school if they are **asymptomatic**.

We hope that this message has given you some clarity this afternoon. As always, if you are ever unsure of the latest procedures or would like any advice, please contact the school where we will be delighted to help.

Many thanks for your ongoing support and co-operation.

The St. Brigid's Team