



**An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna**  
Department of  
Education and Skills

**Summer Provision 2020**  
*Reconnecting with Education*

**COVID-19 Guidance for provision of the  
Home-based Summer Programme to Support Children with Special Educational or  
Care Needs**

## 1. Introduction

This *COVID-19 Guidance for provision of the Home-based Summer Programme* is designed to support parents, tutors and SNAs in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19 has presented an unprecedented global challenge for all of society, including our children. Learning has been challenging for many students since school buildings closed. The Government's decision of 5 June, following recent public health advice, makes it possible to run summer provision for children in certain circumstances.

The Home-based Summer Programme is similar to what is usually known as July Provision. The Scheme is available to support certain eligible children, and normally takes place in the child's home.

The home-based strand will **only be available where the child's school is not running a programme or it does not have capacity to accommodate an eligible student in the planned programme**. Because there is no school-based programme at post-primary, the Home-Based Programme is also available for eligible post-primary children.

In these situations, the Department of Education and Skills will provide grant funding towards the engagement by Parents of a registered teacher / SNA to provide home based support for 10 hours a week for 4 weeks. Alternatively, where a child with complex needs is unable to access a school-based programme, the HSE will provide a home support worker. Where this option is provided, there may be potential for further input from other members of the multidisciplinary disability team.

There is flexibility as to when the programme occurs.

Full information on the Home-based Summer Programme, including programme aims, eligibility and how to participate, is available at [www.gov.ie/summerprovision](http://www.gov.ie/summerprovision).

This document aims to provide details of:

- General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
- Special Educational Needs
- Control measures

Where a school wishes to facilitate the provision of the Home-based Summer Programme, it is free to do this. In doing so it should have regard to its own COVID-19 Response Plan.

## 2. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

Everyone should at all times adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the COVID-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website – <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>.

The most common respiratory symptoms of COVID-19 infection include; a high temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

A member of the household, a tutor or an SNA displaying these symptoms should immediately inform the parent/tutor/SNA, as appropriate. Home-based provision must not proceed if a member of the household has any of the symptoms listed below:

- ✓ High temperature
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

The following advice is provided to inform parents, students, tutors and SNAs **how to reduce the chance of getting infected by the coronavirus**:

### ***Wash your hands frequently***

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser in line with the health guidance, especially after touching another person or their personal items, after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food.

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser kills viruses that may be on your hands.

### ***Physical distancing***

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances is not practicable. Parents whose child is availing of the home-based Summer Programme are therefore asked to maintain an awareness of signs, symptoms or changes which might suggest illness/COVID-19 infection and, where symptoms are present, the home-based Summer Programme should not take place.

Similarly, tutors/SNAs should be aware of their responsibility not to attend to provide the home-based programme if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

### ***Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth***

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

### ***Practice respiratory hygiene***

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that everyone in the household adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

**Do**

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

**Do Not**

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

**You should wash your hands:**

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after eating
- Before and after preparing food
- If you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing)
- Before and after being on public transport
- Before and after being in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd)
- When you arrive and leave buildings
- If your hands are dirty
- After toilet use

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

**People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):**

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk.

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age – even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for [cancer](#)
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, [severe asthma](#), pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and [severe COPD](#)
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are [taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections](#) (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. It is not envisaged that anyone considered very high risk would volunteer for Summer Provision 2020.

### **3. Control Measures**

A range of essential control measures should be implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of the tutor/SNA and members of the household as far as possible.

#### **General**

- Tutors/SNAs should work consistently with the same household(s)
- Tutors/SNAs should be aware of the common symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath and myalgia/muscle aches) and that if they have symptoms of infection including COVID-19 should not provide the service
- Families should inform the tutor/SNA as soon as possible if any member of the family has a new cough, temperature or shortness of breath

#### **Hand Hygiene**

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using either soap and water or a hand sanitiser.

#### **Equipment**

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which require the use of aids and appliance and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where this equipment is kept in the home, parents should ensure that it is cleaned regularly and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

#### **Cleaning**

Regular and thorough cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should be conducted in particular, toilets, door handles, etc. Cleaning should be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

The work area which is being used for the Home-based Summer Programme should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use each day.

#### **Before entering the student's home:**

- The tutor/SNA should confirm that the child and members of the child's household have no symptoms of COVID-19

#### **On arrival to student's home:**

- The tutor/SNA should perform hand hygiene with soap and water or with hand sanitiser if their hands are visibly clean on arrival and when leaving the house
- The tutor/SNA should bring a limited number of the items that they expect to use into each child's home
- The tutor/SNA should bring as little as possible of their personal items into the child's home. Where it is necessary for the tutor/SNA to bring personal items with them, they should try to avoid using them in the child's home and minimise any

contact between the child and the tutor/SNAs personal items. If the tutor/SNA brings a mobile phone into the student's home, they should try to avoid using the phone during the visit and if use is unavoidable they should remember to clean the mobile after leaving the premises

**During the visit:**

- The tutor/SNA should remember not to touch their face (eyes, nose or mouth) with their hands
- The tutor/SNA should try and maintain a physical distance of 2m from adults in the house where possible
- Where social distancing cannot be maintained a facial covering should be considered. Public health guidance on the use of face coverings is available at this link – <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>
- Gloves are not required and should not be worn

**After the visit:**

- The tutor/SNA should ensure that any items that have been used by the child are appropriately cleaned and if necessary disinfected before using it in another household