



Office of the National Clinical Director for Health Protection

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5<sup>th</sup>. April 2022

Deputy Joe Flaherty  
TD  
Dail Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 1

Dear Deputy Flaherty,

**PQ13502/22: To ask the Minister for Health the public health supports that are available to schools for Covid-19; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

The above PQ has been forwarded to my Department for direct response to you on same.

In Special Schools, Public Health Departments continue to work with school principals to manage cases of COVID-19 within their setting. We support the principals in finding solutions to minimise exclusion from school for this vulnerable group. Where possible, we are trying to support the children to stay in school with appropriate mitigation measures and home testing. Where exclusions are necessary, the Public Health Departments advise on duration and testing options.

When a Principal of a mainstream school is notified that a child has a positive COVID-19 test result, school principals are no longer asked to text the other parents in the pod. Contact tracing no longer takes place in Early Learning and Care Settings and Mainstream Primary Schools. Parents of children in mainstream schools have access to a voluntary antigen testing programme if they wish to avail of it. The Antigen Freephone number is: 1800 110055, or parents may order antigen tests online. All children in a pod/class can continue attending school as long as they remain asymptomatic and do not have a positive COVID-19 antigen or PCR test result.

Principals of schools can access a dedicated Principals helpline should they require advice. Principals can also access a dedicated school Frequently Asked Questions resource.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Cuddihy".

**DR. JOHN CUDDIHY**  
**DIRECTOR OF HPSC AND OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CLINICAL DIRECTOR FOR**  
**HEALTH PROTECTION**  
**Medical Council Registration Number: 016227**