



Alliance Française

Dublin

Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**



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Public Health  
Advice

# **Alliance Française Dublin's COVID-19 PROTOCOL For Students & General Public**

Exposure to COVID-19 is a public health risk which affects all citizens. We have worked hard to make sure we provide a safe environment for students, visitors, patrons, library users and staff. Health and safety is our utmost priority. Please read the following information carefully so we can protect ourselves and each other.

*This is a living document, last updated 05/01/2022*

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# I. Context & Definitions

## - *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.

## - *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.

## - *What are the 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 new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry;
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties;
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all. [Complete list of symptoms](#) from the HSE website.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate (= stay in your room) and only go out to get a PCR test. If your symptoms get worse or you are worried about symptoms, phone your GP.

## - *What to do with positive / negative results?*

### 1. Positive COVID-19 PCR test result

A positive result means the test found signs of COVID-19 (coronavirus). The advice on this page applies whether or not you are fully vaccinated.

- **Self-isolate** (= stay in your room) You need to self-isolate (stay in your room) because there is a high risk you could spread the virus to other people. Do this even if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

Stay in a room on your own, with a window open for ventilation. Avoid contact with other people completely. Do not leave your room unless you need urgent medical attention, such as going to a hospital.

- *With a booster vaccine:* isolate for 7 days (booster more than a week ago) or 10 days (booster less than a week ago)

- *Vaccinated without a booster:* isolate for 10 days (or 7 days if you had Covid within the last 3 months)

- *Not vaccinated:* isolate for 10 days

- **Provide details of your close contacts** to the contact tracing team. The text message you received for the result includes a link to a website where you can upload contact details for your close contacts. If you do not use the website, a contact tracer will phone you to collect the details.

More information: [hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/positive-result/](https://hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/positive-result/)

## 2. Negative COVID-19 PCR test result

If your PCR test is negative, you'll get a text message to say that the test did not detect COVID-19. This means that the virus was not found in your sample. A negative result does not mean that you've never had COVID-19.

If you were tested because you have symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate (= stay in your room) until you have not had any symptoms for 48 hours.

You can return to your normal activities when you have not had symptoms for 48 hours. This includes going to work or school.

If you have done a PCR test because you got a positive antigen test but did not have symptoms. For example, as a close contact. If your PCR test is negative you can stop self-isolating right away but you should continue to restrict your movements (stay at home) for the time period you were advised to by the HSE contact tracers.

More information: [hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/negative-test/](https://hse.ie/conditions/covid19/testing/negative-test/)

### - *What to do if you are a close contact?*

If you are a close contact you need to:

- restrict your movements (stay at home) if you have no symptom – or self-isolate (stay in your room) if you have symptoms
- do antigen tests

Do these even if you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or had a previous positive COVID-19 PCR test.

#### 1. Close contact with a booster vaccine:

Booster more than a week ago: restrict movement for 5 days and take 3 antigen tests / Booster less than a week ago: restrict movement for 10 days and take 5 antigen tests.

#### 2. Close contact, vaccinated without a booster:

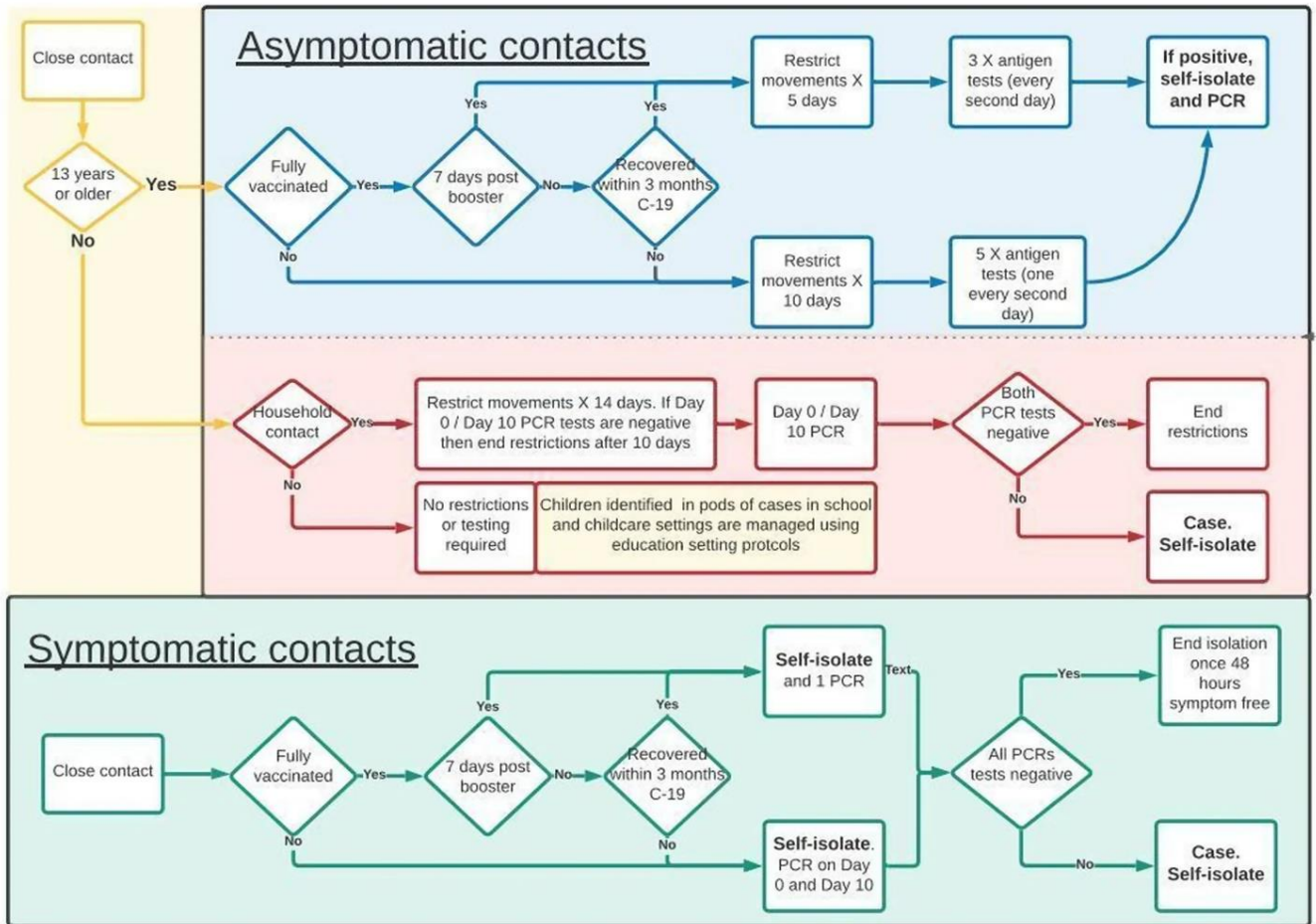
Restrict movement for 10 days and take 5 antigen tests

#### 3. Close contact, vaccinated without a booster but you had Covid within the last 3 months:

Restrict movement for 5 days and take 3 antigen tests

#### 4. Close contact and not vaccinated

Restrict movement for 10 days and take 5 antigen tests



More information: [hse.ie/conditions/covid19/contact-tracing/close-contact/](https://www.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/contact-tracing/close-contact/)

- *More resources on COVID-19*

You can find all COVID-19 information, including translations, on the HSE website: [hse.ie/eng/services/covid-19-resources-and-translations/](https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/covid-19-resources-and-translations/)

## II. What you can expect from us

Alliance Française Dublin has reopened to the public in August 2021 after staying closed for over 17 months and operating fully online.

While still available online for an unlimited duration, all our services have now resumed on-site with the exception of the French Café *Chez Max* which is preparing for a safe return.

As an Irish Registered Charity, regulated in Ireland, our response plan is based on the Government's directives, HSE and HSPC's recommendations, and following NPHE's advice. Our decisions were also informed by the Response Plans and Protocols of the English Language Teaching Organisations (ELTOs) and the Independent Language School Group (ILSG), developed in conjunction with and endorsed by the Department of Further and Higher Education.

Here are the measures implemented by Alliance Française Dublin for your safety and comfort and in order to minimise the risk of contagion:

### *Sanitation*

Sanitizing units and bins can be found at the entrance and on each floor of the building.

All classrooms are equipped with hand-sanitizer bottles and disinfectant wipes for you to use.

### *Cleaning*

We employ a full time cleaner who is on hand to sanitize the common areas and classrooms in a systematic fashion, especially around high movements (before and after a class for instance).

### *Occupancy*

We have kept the 2-metre distancing rule in all the building at all time.

We have reduced classroom occupancy in order to comply with social distancing rules. The number of students allowed at a time in a class is displayed on the door of each room.

All course timetables are staggered to prevent crowds.

Use of the lift is strictly limited to one person at a time and should be reserved for people of limited mobility.

Toilets can only be used by two people at a time.

## *Ventilation*

Ventilation of the building is achieved by mechanical means. Filtered fresh air is constantly pumped throughout the building. In addition to this the building will be fully aerated for 15 minutes before each class and for 15 minutes after each class, by opening all windows and doors. Doors remain open to for the duration of the class.

Air purifiers are also installed in specific classrooms.

## *Circulation*

We are operating a one-way system in the building. Visitors enter by the front door and reach the upper floors through the main stairs. They exit by the back stairs. The back stairs or fire exit brings you into the basement area where you will exit and ascend the steel steps to the steps outside the main entrance. (Regular students will be familiar with this route as it follows our fire evacuation route). The code for the silver door on exiting is 5454.

## *Signage*

There are HSE approved posters displayed in all corridors and classrooms with Covid-19 recommendations.

Floor markings are here to remind you of the current one-way circulation in the building.

There are also clear and prominent school facilities map on display.

## *Accountability*

We have readied outlines and summaries of our operations and are keeping records, to facilitate/assist Public Health action when requested by the HSE as part of the statutory investigation and management of COVID-19.

A COVID-19 Officer and Lead Worker Representatives (LWR) were appointed.

A dedicated email address was created that you can contact anytime: [safety@alliance-francaise.ie](mailto:safety@alliance-francaise.ie)

## *Online move*

We are ready to toggle online all our services, both linguistic and cultural. In the event of an online move, our courses take place with the same teacher and the same timetable, live on the videoconferencing service *Zoom*, using one of the finest Learning Management Systems (LMS), the French e-learning platform *Apolearn*. It is easy to use and we have a technical team here to help you through any problem.

### III. What is expected from you

Here are the rules, both legal requirements and house rules, we kindly ask you to observe:

- *Do not come to our premises if you feel unwell or show any COVID-19 symptoms.*
- *Produce a valid COVID certificate (DCC) on entering the building.*
- *Sign in the logbook at Reception.*
- *Wear a face mask inside the building at all times (except for under 9 years old students).*
- *Maintain a social distancing of 2 metres measures inside the building at all times.*
- *Regularly wash and disinfect your hands.*
- *Follow the one-way circulation route operating in the building.*
- *Be respectful of your fellow students and of our staff. Please take a moment to consult our Code of conduct: [alliance-francaise.ie/Conduct.pdf](https://alliance-francaise.ie/Conduct.pdf)*
- *Be flexible and take into consideration the fact that, in these conditions, Alliance Française Dublin might not be in a position to fulfil its contractual obligations where those obligations have become impossible or impracticable to perform, including but not limited to the events of national or local lockdowns, building or class closure, unforeseen cancellations.*



## IV. Frequently Asked Questions

- *Why am I asked to produce a COVID-19 Certificate at the entrance of the building?*

If there is a case of COVID-19 in the institute, the procedures for close contacts are decidedly different for the vaccinated and the unvaccinated, in order to let you and your fellow patrons know what is needed to be done we are asking for your vaccine status.

On the practical side, Health and Safety recommendations as well as sanitary restrictions also vary drastically whether we accommodate a fully vaccinated group of people or a mixed one. Knowing that students and patrons are fully vaccinated is the only way for us to maintain our operations at a sustainable level, or to prevent a temporary closure that our charitable organisation simply could not afford.

- *Will you contact me if there has been a confirmed case in the building while I was there?*

No, we cannot. The investigation and management of all cases/outbreaks of notifiable infectious diseases, including COVID-19, are the legislative responsibility of the HSE that will contact you directly. On the other hand, once we have been notified of a positive case in the class, we will contact students to let them know their class is moved online.

- *Do I have to contact you if I have discovered I am a close contact / have received COVID-19 Positive PCR test after paying a visit to your premises?*

We cannot ask you to disclose this information but if you feel comfortable telling us, please do. The most important being to inform the HSE.

- *Are all the other students in my class vaccinated?*

Yes, all adult students are fully vaccinated, it is mandatory to enrol in an on-site course. There are currently no guidelines regarding the under-18s but we will follow as always the official recommendations.

- *Why is there a 2-metre distancing in my classroom when the sector guidelines allow 1 metre?*

COVID-19 protocols in Higher & Further Education sectors as well as in Language Centres in Ireland have indeed reduced the social distancing to 1 metre, but we have decided to keep the 2 metres as an extra precaution until at least February 2022.

- *What happens if my course cannot take place on-site?*

In the event of a national or local lockdown, a Government directive that educational centres cannot remain open, or a student/teacher testing positive for COVID-19, the course will be held online instead. Please note that Alliance Française Dublin will not be able to refund or credit classes that could not happen on-site but were taught online.

- *Are the online and on-site classes the same?*

Yes, the tools and technology may vary but our courses are exactly the same in-person or remotely. They provide the same full qualified and trained teachers, teaching methodology, material, pace, format and curriculum.

- *Will I be able to continue with my online tuition and cultural activities after all this?*

Yes, our online services are here to stay as you have been numerous to enjoy our remote activities, very often outside the Dublin area.

- *Do you say “Le COVID” ou “La COVID” in French?*

This is a fundamental question and we are glad you've asked. As it happens, the *Académie Française* has cleared this matter: COVID-19 literally means *la maladie coronavirale 2019* (feminine), not *le virus* which the disease comes from (masculine), so you're supposed to say *LA COVID* (but please don't).

Do you have any other questions? Contact us at [safety@alliance-francaise.ie](mailto:safety@alliance-francaise.ie)