ELE Ireland Advisory to Host Families

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, staff and host families is our utmost priority.

The following information is relevant for hosting international students arriving into Ireland.

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 (NPHET). 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.

ELE Ireland Advisory to Host Families

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.

Communication

Regarding accommodation for students, communication with the student and the host family is of major importance. Accommodation providers are a key part of student experience. Information sharing is crucial, especially when it comes to student medical issues or other related issues. Host families in high-risk groups such as elderly people or those with compromised immunity must inform the school before engaging in hosting students.

Students travelling to Ireland

When students are arriving into Ireland they are requested to **restrict their movements** for 14 days. This means they should avoid contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. They should also:

- not go to school or work
- not use public transport
- not visit others / not go to house viewings
- not have visitors at your home
- not go to the shops or pharmacy unless it's absolutely necessary
- not meet face-to-face with older people

This period of restricted movement can be shortened if students receive a negative/'not detected' Covid-19 test result, a minimum of five days after their arrival in Ireland.

The request to restrict movements does not apply if students travel from green regions.

The full official guidelines can be found **here**.

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

Students are asked to familiarise themselves with the Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 and the current restrictions in place.

ELE Ireland Advisory to Host Families

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 (20 lessons (50 minutes each) 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 Atlas teachers, and
- will have a collaborative and task based approach, focusing on speaking and language production.

Covid-19 School Safety Protocols

Students are further asked to familiarise themselves with the schools **Covid-19 School Safety Protocols**.

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.
- Students' temperature will be checked each morning when entering the school.
- If students feel unwell or show any symptoms of Covid-19, they must stay at home and inform the school.
- Regular hand washing and disinfecting.

Student showing symptoms

In the event of a student or host(s) showing symptoms or testing positive:

- Do not allow the student to go to school
- Inform the school immediately
- Call your GP for further guidance
- Student needs to self-isolate, host family needs to restrict movements if no symptoms of COVID-19, unless instructed otherwise
- Host family needs to provide lunches

Self-Isolation Periods

- **Positive test result:** Only stop self-isolating when you have had no fever for 5 days and it has been 10 days since you first developed symptoms.
- **Negative test result:** If you had a negative test result and were tested because you had symptoms of COVID-19, only stop self-isolating when you have had no symptoms for 48 hours.

ELE Ireland Advisory to Host Families

Cleanliness in the Home

- Please display the HSE posters regarding [COVID-19 prevention](#) and [hand washing](#) in your home. If you cannot print the posters please contact the school and we will send you a copy by post.
- Prior to arrival students are asked for medical conditions, which is especially important if students are in high-risk categories. This information is passed on to the host family. Similarly host families need to inform the school of any medical conditions.
- Host families must provide single room (i.e. no twin share) options unless students are related or from the same household.
- Host families should review cleaning requirements – See Appendix 2

Disinfection of environments in non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with Covid-19

Evidence of environmental persistence Recent publications have evaluated the survival of SARS-CoV-2 (Covid 19) on different surfaces. According to van Doremalen et al., the environmental stability of SARS-CoV-2 is up to three hours in the air post-aerosolisation, up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel, albeit with significantly decreased titres.

Disinfectants:

Disinfectants are classified as biocidal products and are regulated by the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) (EU) No 528/2012 to ensure that risks are properly assessed before they are placed on the market in EU/EEA countries. In general, alcohol-based disinfectants (ethanol, propan-2-ol, propan1-ol) have been shown to significantly reduce infectivity of enveloped viruses like SARS-CoV-2, in concentrations of 70-80% with one minute exposure time . However, ethanol has not yet been approved under the BPR, so biocidal products based on ethanol are not authorised under the BPR but are available under transitional Measures.

Biocidal products having virucidal activity and authorised under the BPR are efficacious against SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. This also applies to products used as hygienic hand and skin disinfectants, which state they have limited virucidal activity or activity only against enveloped viruses. For more information and for an indicative list of authorised disinfectant products, please visit the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) at https://echa.europa.eu/covid-19.

Cleaning Common Areas:
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned as often as possible (at least daily and if possible more frequently). Examples of these surfaces are doorknobs and door bars, chairs and armrests, tabletops, light switches, handrails, water taps, elevator buttons, etc.
- The use of a neutral detergent for the cleaning of surfaces in general premises (i.e. not for premises where a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been) should be sufficient.

- The cleaning of toilets, bathroom sinks and sanitary facilities used by several people should be carefully performed. Consider the use of a disinfectant effective against viruses, such as 0.1% sodium hypochlorite, or other licensed virucidal products following the instructions for use provided by the manufacturer.
- Host families should consider to wear PPE when performing cleaning activities. The use of the usual set of PPE (e.g. uniform – which is removed and frequently washed in warm water – and gloves) is enough for the protection when cleaning general premises.
- The cleaning material should be properly cleaned at the end of every cleaning section.
- Hand hygiene should be performed each time PPE such as gloves are removed.
- Waste material produced during the cleaning should be placed in the unsorted garbage.

Cleaning options after the presence of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19:
In the event a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been in a specific location this should be first well ventilated with fresh air for a minimum of 1 hour, and thereafter carefully cleaned with a neutral detergent, followed by decontamination of surfaces using a disinfectant effective against viruses.

- Cleaning procedure, use of disinfectants and textile cleaning should follow the instructions outlined in the section above for non-healthcare settings.
- Disposable, single-use cleaning equipment is suggested.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used as follows:
  − surgical mask − uniform and single-use plastic apron − gloves.
- Hand hygiene should be performed each time after removing gloves or mask.
- Waste material produced during the cleaning should be placed in a separate bag, which can be disposed in the unsorted garbage. Cleaning options for all type of premises during the COVID-19 pandemic

Managing Risks
- Single en-suite rooms present a good option for social distancing if available
- The biggest risk areas are likely to be common spaces (kitchens, living rooms and other social spaces
- Each student receives a information sheet explaining the COVID19 protocols in place
- Provide hand sanitiser in rooms, at all entrance and exit points and at key locations throughout the property.
- You must display appropriate COVID-19 signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures throughout your property. See poster here and also https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/
- Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as table tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas.
- Keep a log of anyone that enters the property (for contact tracing purposes)
- Any student which shows signs of illness must isolate. Isolated individuals should avoid contact, as much as possible, with all people and animals within the same house.
- Students must not come to school if they are ill or feel unwell.

ELE Ireland Advisory to Host Families

Covid-19 Self-Declaration Form
Before students go to the school they must complete a **Covid-19 Self-Declaration Form** with their contact information. If they don't complete this form we cannot let them enter the school.

Staggered Class Times [If applicable]
To avoid crowding of students on arrival and departure, class times will be staggered. This means you will either start your class at x.xx am, x.xx am, or x.xx am. Students must arrive on time for the start of their class. If they arrive 15 minutes earlier or 15 minutes late they 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 they miss a whole week without giving the school prior notice, they must resubmit the **Covid-19 Self-Declaration Form**. We advise students to attend all classes or to inform the school if they cannot attend or if you are not feeling well.

Travelling abroad / Holidays
If students are leaving and returning to Ireland during their course (e.g. the are going on holidays) they must inform the school of their travel plans and flight details. Depending on where they are going they may have to restrict their movements for 14 days upon their return to Ireland and will not be able to join 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 students 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.