



16 December 2020

Dear Parents,

Through the hard work of you, your family, teachers and people all across the community, Ireland has managed to suppress COVID-19 to the lowest incidence levels in the EU in recent weeks. We collectively have managed to slow the spread of the virus and protect each other throughout this pandemic. Schools continue to be safe places, and this is due to the collective effort of the entire school community.

However, as we enter the Christmas season, we should remember that this highly contagious virus is still circulating. We need to continue to protect ourselves and our loved ones by washing our hands regularly, covering our coughs and sneezes, physically distancing, wearing face coverings and avoiding crowds.

Please consider making a plan for Christmas and the New Year period and consider especially whether you will be meeting loved ones who are medically vulnerable. We know that the incubation period for COVID-19 can be up to 14 days and people can be infectious even if they have no symptoms.

Given that we are less than 14 days from Christmas Day, if you know you and your family will be meeting loved ones who are older or who are medically vulnerable over Christmas, plan to restrict your social interactions and minimise the number of people you meet from now.

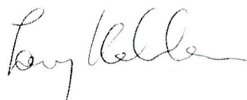
Please avoid all non-essential domestic and international travel. Anyone who does travel internationally must restrict their movements for 14 days on arrival into Ireland. Alternatively, travellers may take a PCR test on day 5 after arrival and should continue to restrict their movements until they receive a 'not detected' result.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to note that the children's flu vaccination programme is now extended to include all children between the ages of 2-17 years to further protect our families and community. The children's flu vaccine is given as a nasal spray through participating GP practices and pharmacies and only takes a few minutes. More information is available at www.hse.ie/flu.

We are actively planning to begin vaccinating people for COVID-19 in early 2021. We cannot afford to drop our guard now. When attending the workplace or school, please be vigilant and remind your children to follow all the hygiene and safety measures that have been put in place to prevent and control COVID-19 infection that have proved to be very successful since schools reopened.

Wishing you and your family a safe and peaceful Christmas.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Holohan', written in a cursive style.

Dr Tony Holohan
Chief Medical Officer



16 Nollaig 2020

A Thuismitheoirí,

Trí bhur gcuid oibre crua agus bhur n-iarracht shuntasach ag obair le comhairle sláinte poiblí, d'éirigh le hÉirinn COVID-19 a choinneáil faoi smacht go dtí an leibhéal minicíochta is ísle san AE le seachtainí beaga anuas. D'éirigh linn le chéile scaipeadh an víris a mhoilliú agus a chéile a chosaint i rith na paindéime seo. Is áiteanna sábháilte iad scoileanna fós agus tá sé sin de bharr na hiarrachta ar fad atá déanta agus atá á dhéanamh ag an bpobal scoile.

Agus muid ag dul isteach i séasúr na Nollag, áfach, ba cheart dúinn cuimhneamh go bhfuil an víreas an-tógálach seo fós ag scaipeadh. Caithfidimid leanúint orainn muid féin agus ár ngaolta a chosaint trí ár lámha a ní go rialta, casacht agus sraothartach a chlúdach, scaradh sóisialta a choinneáil, clúdaigh aghaidhe a chaitheamh agus sluaite a sheachaint.

Smaoinigh ar phlean a dhéanamh maidir le sóisialú thar thréimhse na Nollag agus smaoinigh go háirithe ar cibé a mbeidh tú ag bualadh le daoine atá leochaileach ó thaobh na sláinte de. Tá a fhios againn go bhfuil tréimhse ghoir COVID-19 suas le 14 lá agus go bhféadfadh daoine a bheith tógálach gan siomptóim.

Ós rud é nach bhfuil fágtha ach 14 lá go dtí Lá Nollag, má tá a fhios agat go mbeidh tú féin agus do theaghlach ag bualadh le daoine leochaileacha ó thaobh na sláinte de i rith na Nollag, deán amach plean chun do chaidrimh shóisialta a shrianadh agus an líon daoine a mbuaileann tú leo as seo amach a íoslaghdú.

Seachain gach taisteal neamhriachtanach intíre agus idirnáisiúnta le do thoil. Ní mór do dhaoine a thaistealaíonn go hidirnáisiúnta srian a chur ar a ngluaiseachtaí ar feadh 14 lá ar theacht isteach go hÉirinn dóibh. Mar mhalairt ar sin, féadfaidh taistealaithe tástáil PCR a dhéanamh ar lá a 5 tar éis dóibh teacht go hÉirinn agus ba chóir dóibh leanúint dá gcuid gluaiseachtaí a shrianadh go dtí go bhfaighidh siad toradh 'níor braitheadh Covid-19

Ba mhaith liom an deis seo a ghlacadh le cur in iúl duit go bhfuil an clár vacsaíniú in aghaidh an fhliú ar fáil do pháistí ó 2 bhliana d'aois go 17 bliain d'aois anois, ionas gur féidir linn ár dteaghlach agus ár bpobail a chosaint. Tugtar an vacsaín trí sprae sróine agus is féidir é a fháil ó dhochtúir ginearálta atá á thabhairt agus cogaslanna áitiúla. Ní thógann sé ach cúpla nóiméad. Tá tuilleadh eolais ar fáil ag www.hse.ie/flu.

- Táimid ag pleanáil go gníomhach chun vacsaíniú in aghaidh COVID-19 a dhéanamh ar dhaoine go luath in 2021. Ní féidir linn a bheith neamhairdeallach anois. Agus tú ag dul ag obair nó ag dul ar scoil, bí ar an aire agus meabhraigh do do pháistí go bhfuil sé tábhachtach go leanann siad na treoracha ar fad a bhaineann le sláinteachas agus sábháilteacht chun smacht a chur ar COVID-19 ar d'éirigh go maith leo ó athoscail na scoileanna.

Guímid Nollaig shábháilte shíochánta ort féin agus ar do theaghlach.

Is mise, le meas,



An Dr Tony Holohan
Príomhoifigeach Leighis