

A year into this COVID-19 pandemic, it can be easy to let some of the original rules set in place fall to the wayside. Paying attention and adhering to these guidelines is one of the crucial aspects that will help us slow the spread of COVID-19 and return to normal as soon as possible. In this short booklet, we will go through aspects such as social distancing, bubbles/pods, and following defined pathways of movement.

As we have gotten used to this new normal, children may have forgotten the importance of following these guidelines. This document should offer some guidance in reiterating why these guidelines were given in the first place.

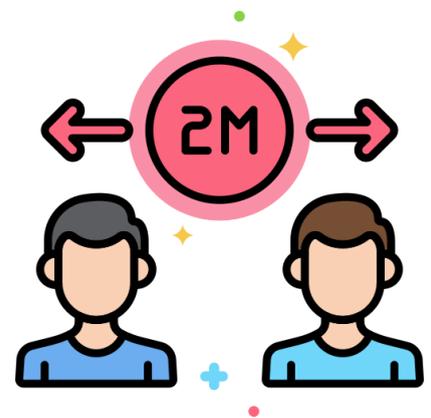
Social Distancing



Social distancing is making sure we stay at least two metres apart from the people outside of our household. We should make sure we stay socially distanced because this will help to stop the spread of COVID-19. By staying far apart, it's much less likely that we will pass on the virus or that we will get sick from other people.

We need to remember to stay socially distanced when standing in queues as well as when we go for walks or are playing outside.

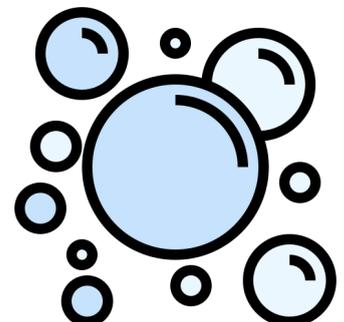
It can be difficult having to stay away from our friends and family. But, remember you can still call them or send pictures and letters. Remember, we won't always have to do social distancing, but we need to do this right now to protect ourselves as well as our family members and loved ones.



Bubbles & Pods

In your school, you are part of bubbles and pods. Your bubble is the class that you are part of, but you may also be part of a smaller "pod". Schools created these social bubbles to reduce the spread of COVID-19. By having these smaller groups, it is a lot easier to track the spread of COVID-19. It is also really important because by being in contact with fewer people, there are fewer people that we could spread the virus to and fewer people we could get it from.

It's really important that you only play and have contact with your bubble/pod when you are at school. By staying with fewer people, you are protecting yourself and your family.



You may also be part of a bubble with another family. By staying with this bubble and only meeting with this other family, you are helping to slow the spread of COVID-19. Like with the

school bubbles, by staying within your bubble at home it is much easier to track the spread of COVID-19.

Following “One Way” Systems



You might have noticed that there are lots of arrows on the ground at school, at the shops, and in other public areas. These arrows are used to make sure everyone is going the same way and make it less likely we'll bump into someone going the opposite way. Sometimes following these arrows means it will take us a little longer to get to where we are going.

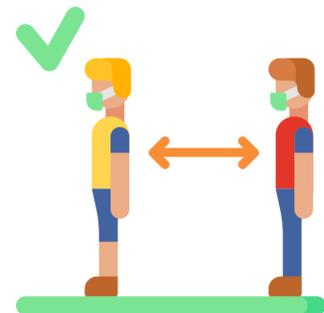
Shops and schools use these arrows to help us socially distance ourselves from other people. By everyone going in the same direction, it is easier to leave a bigger gap between us and them than if there were people coming towards us as well.

Like the other guidelines we've talked about, even though they can stop us from doing what we really want, they are still really important to make sure we look after ourselves and others. By following these guidelines it is much less likely that we will get COVID-19 and also much less likely that we will pass it on to other people.

Queuing

You may have experienced an increase in the number of queues that you have to wait in to complete normal tasks. Shops are limiting the number of people in the shop at any one time to help facilitate social distancing. By queuing we help make sure people are staying safe while shopping.

There are a few things that we need to remember when queuing. Firstly, we need to make sure that we are staying two metres apart from the person queuing in front of you. Sometimes the person behind you may be standing too close to you. If you feel uncomfortable it's ok to ask them politely to take a step back.



Secondly, have patience. Queuing can mean that doing simple things take a little longer than usual. But by following this guideline we are keeping both ourselves and the people around us safe.

For more information on the public health guidelines relating to COVID-19, please visit hse.ie

For more resources please visit <https://autism-toolkit.ie>