

Statement from the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin - 16 March 2021

From [Department of the Taoiseach](#)

Published on 16 March 2021

Last updated on 16 March 2021

"Saint Patrick's Day is a special occasion for every Irish person around the world. It is a day when we celebrate our nation, our heritage and our people.

"This year, the day carries an added poignancy as we reflect on a year that has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the loss of more than 6,500 family, friends and neighbours across the island who have died with the virus.

"We normally spend this day with our extended family and friends going to parades or to sporting events. Unfortunately, we cannot do this tomorrow.

"The enormous effort that the entire country has put in to drive down the rate of infection is working. We have successfully reduced the pressure on our health service, and we are moving in the right direction, but we are at a crossroads.

"The variant that is now dominant in the country is much more contagious and therefore much more dangerous. We must keep it under control and I am hopeful that everyone will make a special effort to mark the day in a COVID safe manner. It is very important that people do not congregate or meet up for social gatherings in their homes or anywhere else. To do so would be to undermine all of the sacrifices we have made to date.

"The opportunity to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day will come again. Our vaccination programme continues to be rolled out and as supply increases, we will get them to people quickly. But for the moment, we must continue to observe the current restrictions.

"Lá Fhéile Pádraig is the day when the world honours the Irish people. There can be no better way to honour our people in 2021 than to stay focused and avoid another wave of infection with this terrible virus."