**

**Covid-19 Return to School Response Plan**

This document has been updated on 29th July taking in to account the most up to date public health advice to date.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Rationale**

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BoM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Burgess National School.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government’s ‘*Return to Work Safely Protocol’*, the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET).

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff, and others. As the advice issued by NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents.

**Underlying Principles**

* The school has a responsibility to make effort to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents, and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
* Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
* It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
* As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

**Assumptions**

* All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system.
* The school is split into 3 class groupings (bubbles) –

(1) Miss Costello’s Junior/Senior infants,

(2) Miss Quigley’s 1st/2nd.3rd and

(3) Miss. McLoughlin’s 4th/5th/6th

and social distancing will be maintained between all these bubbles.

* In Miss Quigley’s and Miss McLoughlin’s rooms (1st-6th) the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between these pods.
* Hand sanitiser will be available in all classrooms, hallways, entrance/exit doors, office, staff areas and toilet areas.

**Our School Profile**

* 68children
* 8 Mainstream classes in three classrooms
* 1 Shared Special Education Teacher
* 1 Special Education Teacher
* 2 SET Rooms
* Teaching Principal
* 2 Full time SNA post
* Part time secretary
* Part time caretaker
* Part time cleaner
* Children in the different class bubbles have access to their designated classroom toilets
* Staff have their own separate toilet facilities and access to a staff room.

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors, and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

Note: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from [www.Gov.ie](http://www.Gov.ie), [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie)[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie),[www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie); [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie);

**PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL**

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government. Details for the reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

**School Buildings**

* Before re-opening our school, our water system was flushed regularly following low usage to prevent Legionella disease
* Surplus furniture has been removed to allow for better social distancing in staff areas and children’s areas. Extra furniture where required will be purchased where necessary.
* A full reorganisation of cleaner storage area to allow for additional space to store PPE, cleaning materials and hand washing/sanitising supplies.
* Reconfiguration of storage in staff room and some classrooms to offer additional space for social distancing.
* Reorganisation of shared equipment for children and staff to allow for systems of regular cleaning and sanitising.
* Isolation area will be located next to the White door.
* Cleaning will take place for 3 hours per day.
* Additional cleaning supplies for the school will be purchased, as necessary.
* Personal Protective equipment identified as necessary has been sourced and purchased.

**Signage**

* Signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene has been displayed around the building. Posters are displayed in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms, and toilets.
* Additional signage at entrance/exit doors requesting visitors to follow guidelines, e.g. wearing masks, appointment only, etc.

**Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines**

* The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.
* The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day and maintain social distancing from the other bubble.

**Staff Procedure for Returning to Work**

In order to return to the workplace, all staff must have completed a Return to Work (School) form.

All staff must have completed Induction Training prior to the return to the workplace. Details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member’s return to the school facility will have been arranged and provided.

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and the School Leadership. The school has appointed **Miss Úna Quigley** as the Lead Worker Representative and **Mrs Jean O Halloran** as the Deputy Lead Worker Representative.

The role of the Lead Worker Representative is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

* Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
* Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
* Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
* Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
* Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
* Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with BOM.

**Communication procedures**

* Staff will be updated regularly by the Principal via email, at staff meetings and/or mobile messages.
* Parents will be updated regularly by the Principal via school communication email and text alerts. Parents are asked to keep the school informed should there be any changes to their email address or phone number.
* Parents are also requested to ensure the school has at least two contact numbers per child and an additional third emergency contact number. An audit of contact details of all parents will be carried out in September and should you not have the required number of contact options on file you will be requested to provide them at that stage.
* Sick day notes, notes informing of early departure or late arrival and other information for the class teacher should be sent via child’s homework journal.
* Should your child have a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 please contact the Principal immediately via the school email or via the school phone number. The Principal will then seek advice on any required action from the HSE. All suspected or confirmed cases will be dealt with in a confidential manner.

**It is vital that the school is informed as soon as possible so that action can be taken to advise individuals to self-isolate, get a Covid-19 test and follow any other advice given by the HSE to prevent further spread of the virus.**

**NOTE:**

*All staff, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and associated Control Measures.*

***The responsibility of keeping Covid-19 out of our school******lies with the whole school community. We all must play our part in keeping each other as safe as we possibly can. In order to do this, it is vital that each member of the school community plays their part in implementing the Control Measures aimed at maintaining safety.***

**Health and Safety Policy**

**Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. Our school has reviewed all emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents, and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the COVID-19 School Response Plan.

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessment has been drawn up in order to consider all the new risks that may arise due to the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan. The updated Covid Risk Assessment is stored in the school office with other Health and Safety materials for the school. A copy of this risk assessment will be made available to all parents / guardians on request.

**General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms.

*They are:*

* High temperature
* Cough
* Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
* Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a school is to minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place.

*This can be achieved through the following measures:*

* Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
* Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.
* Advise staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID-19 not to attend schools and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
* Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
* Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
* Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.
* Staff, pupils, and visitors should at all times adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website – <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Burgess N.S. will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner via email/ text alert/ the school website.

**Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19**

*Wash your Hands Frequently*

* Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.
* Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:
* For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

*Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers*

* Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitisers (when hands are clean).
* Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities.
* Hand sanitiser will be used in conjunction with regular hand washing.

*Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette*

* It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors, and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
* Guidance documentation and information posters will be available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms, and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.
* Handwashing facilities and hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility and are available in each classroom.
* Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.
* By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.
* Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

*Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth*

* Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose, or mouth.

*Physical Distancing*

* Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace and in public areas such as schools.

*Do*

* Wash your hands properly and often
* Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
* Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

*Do Not*

* Touch your eyes, nose, or mouth if your hands are not clean
* Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

**People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable):**

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk.

The list of people in very high-risk groups include people who:

* are over 70 years of age - even if you are fit and well
* have had an organ transplant
* are undergoing active chemotherapy for [cancer](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/cancer-patients.html)
* are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
* have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
* are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
* are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
* have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
* severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, [severe asthma](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/asthma.html), pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and [severe COPD](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/copd.html)
* have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
* are [taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/weak-immune-system.html) (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
* have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply is available in Circular 0049/2020from the Department of Education and Skills. If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service. ***Details of management of children who fall into the ‘vulnerable’ category will be addressed below.***

**CONTROL MEASURES**

**Introduction to the Newly Implemented Control Measures Across the School**

A range of **essential** control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school.

These control measures are outlined in this document.

The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

*Staff, in particular, should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.*

1. **Control Measures for Staff**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties.

In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.
* Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
* Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
* Self-isolate and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.
* Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
* If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
* Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
* Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
* Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
* Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
* Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

*Return to Work Form*

Staff will be required to complete a RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from staff that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.

*Induction Training*

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building.

The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

* Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
* Covid-19 symptoms
* What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
* Outline of the Covid-19 response plan
* Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.
* If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the Covid-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal.

*Covid-19 related absence management*

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES. Details are outlined in Department of Education and Skills Circular 0049/2020.

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. Agreed procedures will be put in place by the Principal to manage absences effectively.

*Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*

Staff are required to wear face coverings throughout the school day following advice issued by the Department of Education on 7th August 2020. Staff will have access to visors and disposable face coverings.

Full PPE will not be required to be worn within the school facility according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid.

Staff will have the following items available for these instances:

* Disposable aprons
* Face shields
* Disposable masks
* Disposable gloves

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

*Wearing of Gloves and Hand Hygiene*

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

*Cleaning*

* Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made.
* Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, door handles, sinks and kitchen areas. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.
* All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.
* Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area and own personal items before and after use each day.
* There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

*First Aid/emergency procedure*

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Burgess N.S. However, staff will be required to wear PPE (as detailed above) when administering first aid.

1. **Control Measures for Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19**

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>.

We ask that parents complete the Return to an Educational Facility Declaration form sent home in September and available on the link below when their child is returning to school following an *absence due to an illness of any nature* this year.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/educationguidance/>

Staff must not attend school if they display any Covid-19 symptoms.

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 has also been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases has been put in place. The designated isolation area is away from other staff and pupils and in a well-ventilated position. It also allows for easy access for parents when collecting their sick child.

If a staff member or pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while on the premises of Burgess N.S. the following are the procedures to be implemented:

* If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
* If the person with the suspected case is a staff member, the staff member will be assisted in leaving the premises to drive home and then contact their GP (if well enough). If the staff member is too unwell to make their own way home, their next of kin will be contacted.
* When an individual becomes unwell they will be brought to the isolation area and their belongings will be collected for them. The person caring for the individual who has become unwell will wear the required PPE (detailed above) and will keep at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person at all times.
* The symptomatic person will wear a disposable face covering (if practicable). Parents will be informed that their child will be wearing a face covering when they are telephoned. The mask must be worn until the person leaves the premises. Please note that parents/guardians collecting their child MUST also wear a face covering when entering onto the school premises.
* Temperature checks will be carried out (if required) using a non-touch thermometer.
* Individuals who are displaying symptoms will be asked to contact their GP (parents to contact on their behalf) as soon as they go home.
* The individual will be encouraged to avoid touching others, surfaces and objects. They will also be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
* Public transport of any kind should not be used.
* If a child or staff member is too unwell to go home or urgent advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
* An assessment of each suspect Covid-19 incident will be carried out by the staff member who dealt with the case. There will be a follow up assessment by the Principal and the information gathered will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery. Advice from the HSE may be sought by the school.
* Following each suspected case, cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved will be carried out.

Staff and parents (on behalf of their child) MUST contact their GP and MUST follow guidelines given to them by their GP.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be strictly followed.

**Children who should not attend school**

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school:

* Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.
* Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19.
* Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
* Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
* Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school – please contact the Principal to discuss further if your child falls into this category.
* Children who have returned home after travelling abroad (countries not on the Green list) and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
* Children who are generally unwell.

**Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period, the class teacher (and/or SEN teacher, where relevant) will support the child’s learning at home through some learning activities that will be shared with parents online.

**Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

If the school is notified that a person in your child’s class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19:

* Public health advice will be sought by the Principal.
* School staff will be informed.
* Advice will be acted upon and communication update will be sent to all families.

*Please be aware that the school reserves the right to protect the privacy of all those who work in and attend the school. We would request that parents respect the privacy of all individuals and families and refrain from engaging in discussions or gossip should a case of Covid-19 occur in our school. Information will be given to all families as quickly as possible once advice has been sought from the HSE. We ask you to refrain from communicating information on social media platforms to preserve the privacy of the individual(s)/families.*

1. **Control Measures for Access to the School Premises and Building**

**Access to the school facility will be in line with agreed school procedures.**

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal only.

Should you wish to discuss a matter with a staff member please phone the school. The school secretary Annie is here every day until 11 o clock. It is requested that meetings with staff be held over the phone in so far as possible. It is felt that most issues can be resolved or discussed in this manner.

Should you feel that your query can not be dealt with over the phone and you would like to have a face to face meeting, you must seek approval from the Principal by outlining your query in an email to [info@burgessns.com](mailto:info@burgessns.com) before any face to face meeting can take place.

Should you have a message for our secretary, please try to deal with this over the phone. Otherwise please request an appointment time by phoning or emailing [info@burgessns.com](mailto:info@burgessns.com) .

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors, and visitors at the workplace.

A contact tracing form must be completed by all persons entering the premises and this log will be held by the Principal. Any person entering the premises will be required to wear a face covering for the duration of their stay. **Access will not be granted to the school without a face covering.**

**Deliveries during the school day**

In so far as possible deliveries are to be made at the front door and left outside. For heavier items requiring a trolley or expensive items that may become damaged in certain weather conditions, deliveries are to be made to the hall only. Delivery drivers will be asked to wear face coverings if entering the building. Staff are to wear face coverings when interacting with delivery personnel.

**Collection of Children during the School Day**

If a parent must collect a child during the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

* Early collections are to be communicated by ringing the school office or email the school in advance.
* When the parent arrives at the school (wearing face covering), they ring the doorbell at the main entrance and step back two metres. When the door is answered, a message will be taken, and the child will be called from their classroom.
* The child will be brought from their class to the parent by a member of staff.
* No parent should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

**Child arriving late due to an appointment**

If a child arrives late due to an appointment, the following arrangements will apply:

* Advance notice should be provided to the class teacher in advance of the appointment via email.
* The parent will walk the child to the front door of the school wearing a mask and stand back 2m from the entrance. The child will proceed to the main front door and ring the doorbell.
* A member of staff will answer the door and bring the child to their classroom.

1. **Control Measures for Arrival and Departure from School**

**New School Hours and Procedures going forward**

* **9:00am – 2.40pm 1st/2nd/3rd/4th/5th/6th**
* **9:00am – 1:40pm Junior/Senior Infants**
* **9:30am – 12:00pm Junior Infants (31st Aug only)**
* **9:00am – 12:00pm Junior Infants (31st Aug -11th Sept)**
* **9:00am – 1:40pm Junior Infants (14th Sept - onwards)**

**Entrance & Exit Points for Specific Classes**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher** | **Class** | **Entrance & Exit Point** |
| Miss Costello | Junior/Senior Infants | Brown door opposite the prefab |
| Miss Quigley | 1st/2nd/3rd | White door at front of school |
| Miss McLoughlin | 4th/5th/6th | Brown door next to railings at the front of the school. |

**Arrival at school**

* School will be open to receive children at 8.45.
* Children will go directly to their classroom
* We ask that parents please observe social distancing etiquette at all times when dropping and collecting their children
* Parents should remain in their cars during both morning and evening drop off times if at all possible (exception will be Jnr/Snr Infants for first two days) and are asked to ensure that they do not allow their child/children to leave the car if there is another family/child exiting their car at the same time.
* Nobody collecting a child may approach the front door or enter the school building.
* Once prior notice has been given via email to the classroom teacher your child will be accompanied out their specific exit door (see above) to meet you
* For adults collecting infants who go home at 1.40pm, they are asked to wear a mask and strictly adhere to social distancing rules. Nobody collecting a child may approach the door or enter the school building. Your child will be brought out to the front of the school to meet you. We ask that on rainy days, adults collecting infants at 1:40 bring an umbrella and always adhere to social distancing guidelines when waiting for their child to exit the side door of the building. Parents are asked to stand socially distanced from one another, wear a mask and are to stand back 2m from the door.
* On wet mornings, all the children will enter and leave the building through the designated doors listed above. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to play on the yard before school starts – they should arrive at their designated time and proceed to their classroom as outlined above.

We ask for co-operation with this as it will mean that the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time will be minimised.

No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building in the morning or evening.

**2.40pm Pick up**

* Children from 1st/2nd/3rd Class will walk out with Miss Quigley through their designated entrance/exit (white door). The children will stand in their pod groupings until they see their parent come to collect them. We ask that all parents please wear masks and observe social distancing. **Please be on time and once you have collected your child, immediately proceed to your car.**
* Children from 4th/5th/6th Class will walk out the brown door from Miss McLoughlin’s room. The children will stand in their pod groupings until they see their parent come to collect them. We ask that all parents please wear masks and observe social distancing. **Please be on time and once you have collected your child, immediately proceed to your car.**

We ask for co-operation with this as it will mean that the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time will be minimised. It will also prevent class bubbles interacting with one another where possible before and after school starts.

***The above systems will apply rain, hail or shine so please make sure that you and your child come to school prepared for the weather!***

1. **Control Measures for Personal Equipment and Clothing**

**Children’s Personal Equipment**

* It is requested that children bring their own pens, pencils, colours, erasers, scissors, glue sticks, calculators, maths sets etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment. Details of what your child needs are on the class booklist.
* It is further requested that all items have the child’s name on them for ease of identification.
* Children are allowed a maximum of two pencil cases. No additional stationary will be allowed at school to avoid clutter and to make cleaning easier on a daily basis.
* It is recommended that children have a home pencil case and a school pencil case to avoid carrying items in and out on a daily basis. We are unable to allow children to share if a child forgets their pencil case.
* Parents will be asked to ensure their children have an adequate supply of stationary and that items that have run out or are lost are replaced as soon as possible as children will not be able to share with others.
* The rooms will have to have windows and doors open as much as possible to ensure adequate ventilation
* Children will not be permitted to hang their coats on the usual hangers and so will have to hang them on their chairs.
* There will be NO HOMEWORK for the month of Sept while we all try to adjust to the new routines - homework will be given in class towards the end of the day and the teacher wearing PPE will correct this once children have gone safely home.

**Shared School Equipment for children**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including laptops, Maths and Science equipment, instruments and the equipment used for structured activities and play in the Infant classroom. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes, Milton, hot soapy water or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

**Lunches**

* Parents must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day.
* Please ensure your child has an adequate supply of drinking water as they may not drink water from the school taps.
* Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children. Children will not be permitted to borrow crockery/cutlery from the staff room.
* Lunch boxes will be stored under each child’s chair during the school day

**Libraries**

The school will still continue to operate libraries in classrooms. Children will be requested to take a book from the library on Monday and return it to the library on a Friday. That way the 72-hour quarantine of books will have passed before the next child takes a book. The libraries will be cleaned and tidied on a regular basis.

**Books, Folders and Copies**

Children should use their own books, folders, and copies and as far as possible should not share with other pupils. **All items are to be labelled with the child’s name.**

**Uniforms/Tracksuits**

Uniforms are to be worm Monday, Wednesday and Friday with tracksuits permitted Tuesdays and Thursdays. This allows families the opportunity to wash and or air their uniforms.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits only for school related activities. Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

1. **Control Measures for Special Educational Needs Provision**

In keeping with our Special Education policy, the SEN Teacher will be providing a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal in small groups where possible and practicable.

Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another. They will also wear a visor or face covering and screens in more confined areas will apply.

The tables and chairs in SET room will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

Staff members (particularly SEN Teacher and SNA) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

**PPE and SEN**

Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks.

1. **Control Measures for Specific Curriculum Areas**

**Teaching and Learning**

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

We intend on keeping lessons as normal as possible and as a result maintain the positive, energetic, and pleasurable atmosphere in our classrooms that we always have. Most lessons across the curriculum will be conducted as normal and the children will not feel any difference throughout the school day.

However, some small changes will have to be made to different curriculum areas. Please see these below.

**Mathematics**

Maths equipment will be cleaned regularly. Sharing of equipment between classes will not occur unless materials are cleaned and quarantined for 72 hours.

**Literacy: English and Irish**

It is hoped that the teaching of literacy will not need to change very much. However, teachers will be mindful of class “pods” (groupings) when conducting oral language activities, novel work, reading groups and station activities.

**SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education)**

There will be an increase in the time allocated to SPHE in the initial months of school. This will allow teachers and children to address any anxieties, worries, stress and upsets surrounding the current situation arising from dealing with Covid-19 in society. It will also allow teachers and children to engage in activities to boost and support wellbeing in our school community.

**Physical Education**

Children will sanitise their hands before and after PE activities.

Where possible, PE will take place outdoors and used equipment will be put aside and sanitised prior to re-use.

**Religious Education**

Information regarding ceremonies for the Sacrament of Confirmation and First Holy Communion will be communicated to all families involved in consultation with the Parish Priest and class teachers.

**SESE: History, Geography, Science**

All equipment used in Science lessons will be cleaned and stored for a quarantine period of 72 hours before another class may use it. Atlases and maps will not be shared between classes. Children will be encouraged to do research at home and online for History and Geography projects to avoid sharing of encyclopaedias and information books across classrooms.

**The Arts: Music, Drama and Visual Art**

Additional social distance will be required for certain music activities, e.g., song singing and the use of certain musical instruments. Children will not share instruments.

Teachers will be mindful of social interaction limitations when planning and teaching drama lessons.

In so far as possible teachers will ensure children have access to their own art equipment and materials (glue sticks, scissors, paint brushes, etc.) during art lessons. Equipment will be washed after lessons and each child will have a set of labelled materials assigned to them for use.

**Visiting Teachers/Coaches**

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities will be explored at a later date and will comply with HSE/DES guidelines. However, it is not recommended that children from different bubbles (classes) would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time. Should the school persue such activities, each class bubble will access the lessons independently. Strict hygiene protocols will be required from all visiting teachers and coaches should this be permitted. You will be updated and notified of procedures in place at all times.

**Substitute Teachers and Substitute SNAs**

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute Teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

**Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child’s learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.

All parents have already provided an email address to the school and the school will use this email to conduct the support of Home Learning should this be required. This will be especially important if the school, or parts of the school have to close due to HSE advice.

1. **Control Measures for Breaktimes, Yard Access and Supervision**

**Breaktimes**

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

Normal School break times are as follows:

11.00 – 11.10: Small break Junior – 3rd

11.10 – 11.20 Small break 4th-6th

12.30-1.00 Lunch Break alternating 15 minutes in 15 minutes out

Children will wash their hands/sanitise their hands and then eat their snack before going to the yard (4th -6th). Children will wash their hands/sanitise their hands and then eat their snack after playing in the yard. (Juniors-3rd) ). All children will wash / sanitise their hands immediately on exit to and return from the yard.

**Yard Access**

Each class bubble will be allocated their own yard area to play in. They will be shown these areas by their teacher on their first day back.

The children will access the yard via their assigned entrance/exit door as above. There will be a teacher and SNA supervising yard at each break.

**Wet days**

The following procedure will take place on wet days:

* Children in the junior room will remain in their classroom and complete activities as organised by their teacher.
* The children in the senior classes will be asked to stay in their pod and select an activity to play with during the breaktime e.g. draw a picture, play a board game, watch a movie, read a book etc. Children may not move from pod to pod. Games will be assigned to the different pods to avoid sharing of materials and resources.
* Children will ask the teacher on supervision if they need to leave their seat, e.g. to go to the toilet.
* Every effort will be made on wet days to find a dry spell of weather to bring children out for a run around to clear their mind and take in some fresh air.

1. **Control Measures for Communal Areas Around the School**

**Hall**

For use when the weather does not allow for PE outdoors. Children will sanitise hands before and after going to the hall. Common touch points will be cleaned before and after the class use the hall

**Corridor**

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection however we will do everything we can to avoid children / staff passing each other in the corridors throughout the day. We will promote “walking on the right”

**Additional Measures to Limit Interactions**

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard when the bell rings and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking, and hugging will not be allowed.

**Doors and Windows**

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground. Classroom doors will be left ajar throughout the day to increase ventilation and decrease touch points

**Cloakrooms and Toilets**

Hand washing facilities are provided in all toilets. The toilets for the senior room have electric hand-dryers and all other toilet facilities throughout the school have paper towel dispensers.

**Office**

Please send all notes, money, cheques, and permission slips to school in an envelope (where possible all communication should be done via email). All envelopes must be labelled with the child’s name and the contents/description of what the money is for. The practice of sending loose change to the school is not allowed.

Insofar as possible children should not be sent to the Secretary’s Office to deliver messages -if this occurs (those times when the teacher cannot leave her class unattended) the child must remains outside the office until directed by the secretary.

As far as possible, staff members should speak with the Secretary from an appropriate distance.

Only 2 people in office at a time.

Parents who wish to speak with the secretary are asked to telephone the office in the first instance. Access to the school building at all times is by appointment only.

**Photocopying.**

Teachers have been asked to carry out photocopying in the office at quieter times in the morning and evening to avoid congestion in the office and are responsible for their own photocopying.

**Shared Items for staff**

Staff must clean down the phone, photocopier, and any shared equipment (laminator, shredder, paper guillotine, booklet stapler etc.) after each use. Wipes and spray available in the office.

**ICT**

Staff will liaise with one another regarding a timetable for the use of common ICT equipment. Devices will be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the strong room.

**Formal Parent/ Teacher Meetings**

Information regarding the annual Parent/Teacher meetings, held normally in November, will be communicated to parents after the Hallowe’en break . We will assess the situation and public health guidelines at this time.

**Staffroom**

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings will be worn.

Staff meetings will be held in larger spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

1. **Control Measures for Cleaning, Hygiene and the use of PPE**

Staff members are not required to wear PPE throughout the school day at present. However, PPE will need to be used occasionally due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.

This might include roles such as:

* Assisting with intimate care needs
* Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
* Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

**Masks**

The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings. However, where a child has symptoms of a suspected case of Covid-19, they will be provided with a disposable face mask (if they are able to wear it). Parents will be informed on the phone that their child will be wearing a mask when they come to collect them.

Staff are required to wear face coverings. Disposable face coverings and visors have been provided to all staff members.

Suspected case – child will wear mask. Parents informed over the phone.

**Gloves**

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.

Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil’s intimate care needs, dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19, or administering First Aid.

There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

**Hand washing and Sanitising**

Hand washing / sanitising will take place at the following times:

* On arrival to the school
* Before eating
* After Yard
* Before PE or other activities outside
* After using the toilet
* When hands are visibly dirty
* Before and after attending the SET room

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in all classrooms etc. Hand washing facilities are available in all children’s toilet areas, staff toilets and staff room. Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message at home.

**Cleaning**

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**Curriculum Guidance for the Return to Primary School**

Staff will follow Department of Education and Skills Curriculum Guidelines for Teachers and School Leaders when planning and teaching this year.

With regard to content that was covered at home during lockdown, teachers will ensure these strands and strand units are given particular attention throughout the coming academic year. Content taught during the lockdown will not be explicitly revised in one full unit or block in September as this would be counterproductive and overwhelming for the children. The children will be far more enthusiastic to be learning from lessons and content that is pitched and paced appropriately as normal. Content covered between March and June will be given special attention when covered throughout this year and into next year. All subjects across all classes are taught in a two-year cycle. No child will lose out; please trust teacher’s professional judgement on this.

With regard to assessment, please be aware that children are assessed continuously all year round. This is a practice that occurs in all schools. The programme for standardised testing will not be altered this year and those tests will occur as normal at the appropriate times. No specific extra testing (other than those carried out in SEN setting or what is part of weekly class work/homework) will occur in the first two months of school as the results would be most likely skewed due to children settling back to the school routine. Should a child present with serious academic difficulties, social anxieties or emotional disturbances arising from the lockdown and school closure, the school is well equipped to address this through our SEN provision.

**Children who fall into the category of vulnerable or high-risk**

Specific procedures have been put in place by the Department of Education on skills to deal with such circumstances.

Please note that this procedure covers children in the vulnerable or high-risk category only and does not include provision for those who are anxious or worried about the return to school. Children who fall outside the remit of this category will be subject to attendance requirements as listed in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Please see the school’s Attendance Policy for further details.

Medical confirmation (Consultant, not General Practitioner) by letter, explaining that a child falls into the category of vulnerable or high risk, will be required. Should your child fall into this category please contact the Principal directly.

**Implications for School Policy arising from the Response Plan**

**Fire Safety**

As per our Fire Safety Policy, children and staff will leave the building in an organised and safe manner should the alarm sound. As a result, social distancing requirements are easily achievable.

Classes will line up ensuring there is at least 2 metres between each class bubble. Fire Drills will be organised by the School Health and Safety Officer and carried out as usual each term.

**Code of Behaviour**

The BoM has a statutory obligation to provide staff with a safe place of work. All threats to safety will not be tolerated by school management and all threats to safety will be dealt with in an efficient, fair, and compliant manner.

The school’s Code of Behaviour aims to cater adequately for instances when a child interferes with school property in a negative manner. The BoM wish to add to the Code of Behaviour instances where a child could interfere with PPE, hand washing supplies, cleaning products, sanitisation stations or sanitiser or the space and equipment provided for dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19 as being a serious misdemeanour.

In addition, children who purposefully cough or sneeze on or around a staff member or other child will be considered to have committed an assault and since such misconduct poses such a high threat to the health and safety of the staff member or child, it will be deemed to be a most serious offence and parents will be called immediately. Consequences including suspension from school will be considered by the Principal and/or BoM in such instances.

Instances where a child threatens another child and/or causes anxiety or upset by referencing Covid-19 will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with our Code of Behaviour also.

**Anti-Bullying**

Should a child continually criticise, humiliate or demean another child for any of the following, that child will be subject to sanctions laid out in our school’s Anti-Bullying policy:

* A child who has/had contracted Covid-19
* A child who has/had symptoms of Covid-19 at school
* A child who has/had been brought to the isolation area as a suspected case of Covid-19 and was sent home
* A child who has/had a test for Covid-19
* A child whose family member or close relative had Covid-19, symptoms or is self-isolating.

Please note this list applies to parents, staff members and other people interacting with the school. This list is not exhaustive and other instances where a child is subject to abuse, intimidation and/or discrimination on any grounds will not be tolerated by the school.

**Wellbeing Policy**

Please see statement on Wellbeing below.

**Health and Safety Policy**

Please see statement on Health and Safety above.

**Supporting Wellbeing in our School**

**Dealing with a child who has anxiety**

It is understandable that some children will be anxious about the return to school following such a lengthy period of lockdown, school closures and societal upheaval. The school would advise parents to talk to their children about the return to school in a positive and upbeat manner. Parents should reassure their children that school will be a safe and comfortable environment when they return and that the teachers have been working really hard to make the return to school as positive and enjoyable as possible. We have made produced some videos for our website (mid August 2020) to help with the transition back to school.

It is a fact of life that there need to be some change to school life. But teachers will use the initial days of this school year to allow the children to become used to being back in the classroom and to socialise with their friends. Teachers will also teach and explain (in an age appropriate manner) why there are some changes to school life and why we need to have different routines.

At the heart of our school’s Covid-19 Response Policy is the necessity to make a safe, happy and comfortable environment for all the children and staff who attend the school/workplace daily. Parents will be asked to support this by reinforcing the positive message at home. Children are very resilient, and we are here to support them and their parents as much as we can.

**Wellbeing of the School Community**

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

* A sense of safety
* A sense of calm
* A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
* A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
* A sense of hope

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

**Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people’s personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal. Alternatively, support for school staff wellbeing is provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE’s Health Promotion Team. An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. Information for staff is available in the school’s staff room.