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**1) Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in Castlesampson N.S. It provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, pupils, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of education for the health and wellbeing of pupils and society as a whole.

This document focuses on the practical steps which can be taken in our school to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and the steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the school itself.

It is intended that arrangements and protocols in this Response Plan will be clearly and regularly communicated to staff, parents, pupils and community through a variety of methods including: email, letter, facebook, phone-calls, posters and signage.

Documents used to inform our Response Plan include:

* COVID-19 Interim Recommendations for the reopening of schools and educational facilities; HPSC

The Following Documents can be accessed at gov.ie/back to school.

* Roadmap for the Full Return to School; DES
* Covid Response Plan for Primary and Special Schools; DES
* Supporting The Wellbeing of School Communities; DES
* Returning to school Curriculum guidance for primary school leaders and teachers; DES
* Circular 0045/2020 : COVID-19 operational supports for the full return to school
* Illustrative primary classroom layouts as referenced in the Roadmap for the Full Return to School
* Maintaining Physical Distance in the Classroom
* Illustrative SEN Classroom layouts as referenced in the Roadmap for the Full Return to School
* Guidance for Primary Schools & Special Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment
* Circular 0049/2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools.

**2. The Purpose / Rationale of the Castlesampson N.S. Covid Response Plan**

Our Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management of Castlesampson N.S. in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our school environment.

It details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government’s

“Return to Work Safely Protocol’, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

We are determined that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of our school facilities complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. By doing so, we minimise the risk to pupils, staff and others.

Our response plan supports the sustainable reopening of school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the pupils in our school. The COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice as appropriate for primary and special schools.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and sustainable return to work, and reopening of schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the BOM, staff, pupils and parents. Some of the steps that we have taken to ensure this collaborative approach include;

* The formulation of a re-opening planning committee consisting of staff, the chairperson of the BoM, the school Principal, the caretaker and the Chairperson of the P.A.
* Regular communication with all staff members via text, phone and email.
* Information letters, email, Facebook messages to parents during August.
* A staggered re-opening of the school with Junior/ Senior Infants and 3rd/ 4th classes returning for a day on Aug 27th and 1st /2nd and 5th/ 6th returning on Friday 28th
* An information day for all staff on Wednesday, August 26th (Croke Park hours)
* The draft Covid-19 Response Plan will be published on the school website prior to ratification by the Board of Management and contributions will be welcomed from both staff and parents.

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

**3: Castlesampson N.S. Policy Statement**

**Castlesampson N.S.** is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

We will:

* continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
* provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
* display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct handwashing techniques
* agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
* inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
* adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
* keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
* ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
* implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
* provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
* implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative, who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Patricia Naughton Rev. Fr. Seán Neylon,

Principal Chairperson BoM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**4) Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

**Planning and Systems:**

**Dissemination of Information:**

* The school will ensure to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education Updates. This will be done by checking www.gov.ie/back to school. on a daily basis as well as using the IPPN, CPSMA and INTO websites. The Principal and Deputy Principal will have responsibility for this.
* When new information or advice is issued, it will be passed on in a timely manner to staff via WhatsApp/email and to parents using a letter, Facebook message or email. The school has a database of emails from parents so that relevant documents could be forwarded in this manner too. Parents will be asked to notify school if their contact details have changed. Pupils will be advised of any relevant new information by the class teachers and where appropriate by the school principal.
* The Board of Management has appointed Ms Elaine McMahon as Lead Worker Representative.

**Formulation of a COVID-19 Response Plan**.

* The re-opening planning committee consisting of members of staff, the chairperson of the BoM, the school Principal, the caretaker/secretary and the Chairperson of the P.A. will contribute towards the formulation of an initial draft Covid-19 Response Plan.
* The draft Covid-19 Response Plan will be shared with staff and parents prior to ratification by the BOM. Contributions will be welcomed from both staff and parents.

**4.1 Induction Training**

There will be induction training for all staff on the Staff Induction day on the 26th of August and all staff will complete a checklist to ensure completion and identify further need afterwards. This training will cover the following:

* A revision of the training materials provided by the Department of Education Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year is under development by the Department. This will be made available to all schools and staff in advance of school reopening at the following link : Government Induction Training
* Outline of latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
* Summary of Covid-19 symptoms
* Procedure for what to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
* Updated Covid-19 Response Plan.
* The control measures in place in the school. (Social distancing, Hand Hygiene, Contact tracing, P.P.E)
* The duties and responsibilities for all staff in preventing the spread of Covid-19.
* Explanation of the Covid-19 contact tracing form.

**4.2 Procedure for Return to Work:**

* In order to return to the workplace, staff of Castlesampson N.S. must complete a COVID-19 ***Return to Work (RTW)*** form. This form will be distributed to teachers and staff in advance of re-opening. Additional copies will be available at **Appendix 2**.
* The **RTW** form needs to be completed and returned to the principal by all staff by the 23rd of August **3 days** before returning to work on the **26th of August**.
* The principal will also provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member’s return to the school facility.
* Teachers will be referred to circular 0049/ 2020 ***Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools.***
* There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at **very high risk**. This following list has been updated in line with Circular 0049/2020.

**People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):**

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

* are over 70 years of age - even if fit and well
* have had an organ transplant
* are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
* 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
* have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
* have a condition that means they 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 (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
* have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools. Currently this is ***Circular 0049/2020***

**4.3) Lead Worker Representative**

The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

**The Board of Management has appointed Secretary/ Caretaker Elaine McMahon as LWR.**

This section sets out how the provisions will operate in schools. The process for appointment of the lead worker representative in schools has been agreed centrally between the Department of Education and the education partners.

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 school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

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

**Role of the Lead Worker Representative**

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

* Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
* Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
* Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
* In conjunction with school management, 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 school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
* In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
* Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
* Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
* Consult with the school management on the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
* Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
* Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
* Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

In our school, a **Deputy Lead Worker Representative, Elaine McMahon** was appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of Deputy LWR the Deputy LWR will be Elaine McMahon.

* deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent and
* assist the LWR in their duties as set out above.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Lead Worker Representative: | Contact Details |
| Michelle Kelly | 090-9683840 |

All staff, pupils, parents, 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.

Full details of the arrangements which will apply for the L.W.R. in primary and special schools is set out at Appendix 3.

**4.4) Signage**

The Schools will display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. These signs will be displayed in the following areas:

* Entrances and Exits
* Classrooms and SEN rooms
* Office
* Toilets and sink areas
* Staffroom/ kitchen

(The Department will provide printed posters to schools, with age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc. This will be made available to all schools and staff in advance of school reopening. These have not yet been issued.

The signs will cover the following areas:

* General advice to schools
* Cough etiquette
* Child hand washing
* Hand hygiene adults
* Use of Face coverings
* Stay safe at Work
* How to use hand sanitiser
* Visitors

The school will source additional signage where required.

**4.5) Preparing the School Building for Re-Opening:**

**Review of the school Building (Systems and Mechanics)**

The school caretaker in consultation with the principal will ensure that the following are in place.

* Flushing the water system at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
* Checking the school equipment and mechanical ventilation for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
* Ensuring the bin collections and other essential services resumed.
* The installation of a water heating unit to provide warm water for hand washing in all sinks.
* Replacing the push taps with mixer taps as children found them difficult to manage.

**Making Changes to Our School Layout to support Physical distancing**:

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The School will reconfigure classrooms and other areas in line with the guidance issues to support physical distancing in advance of school reopening. These areas include:

* Corridor
* Staffroom/ kitchen
* Support rooms
* Classroom and outdoor areas
* Any unnecessary cabinets, furniture etc. will be removed to maximise the space in the classroom.
* A central storage area in the schools for teacher resources will be provided to help maximise the space available within the classroom (press in hallway, office..)
* Desks and chairs in classrooms will be reconfigured to maximise physical distancing as best as possible using the Department’s illustrative layouts which provide guidance on how best to maximise physical distancing***. Illustrative primary classroom layouts as referenced in the Roadmap for the Full Return to School***
* Marking on the floor will be used to ensure distancing between children’s desks
* Marking on the floor will be used to ensure distancing between children and teacher’s desk and whiteboard.
* Each classroom will be treated as a Class Bubble. There will be limited contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles. (Separate play areas, particular entrances and routes to and from school)
* Classroom pods may be used within classrooms if necessary. 1 metre distance will be kept between pods. This is more likely to occur in younger classes to facilitate the use of physical resources to assist learning.

The following guidance will be used to facilitate these changes. ***Maintaining Physical Distance in the Classroom Checklist for Primary Schools & Special Schools***

**Entrance and Assembly areas:**

* Each classroom /bubble will enter the doorway closest to their classroom. The children will continue to play in the areas they have always mindful to stay with their class/ bubble. (See appendix 10 for school map indicating areas)

**Staggered opening times**:

In order to ensure that social distancing can occur and children can enter the school premises in a manner that complies with health and safety guidelines, it will be necessary to stagger opening times in the school in the following manner:

**The school day for 1st to 6th class begins at 9:20am. and finishes at 3 pm.**

**The school day for Junior/Senior Infants begins at 9:20 am and finishes at 2pm.**

**(The school day for Junior Infants begins at 9.20 and finishes at 12.00pm until Sept 11th)**

**We are extending reception times to allow parents to drop their children off between 9.00 am and 9.20 am. We will allocate the slot from 9.00 to 9.10 for Junior Infants and their families until Sept 11th. See parents letter for the organisation of staggered arrivals for all pupils. We will be requesting parents to respect social distancing in the car park and to ensure their children do likewise as they enter school grounds. We will display signage at access points to remind all of social distancing requirements.**

**A member of staff will supervise at access point.**

**4.6) Health and Safety Risk Assessment:**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment.

* The school will review our emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan.
* Any changes to the school's existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school’s safety statement.
* The school will also review our existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan.
* Any changes to the school’s current risk assessments will also be documented and incorporated into the school safety statement.
* Our school’s Covid-19 Risk Assessment has been added. Appendix 9

**4.7) Access to School and Contact Log**

* Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.
* All visitors to the school will enter via the main entrance.
* All visitors will be admitted by the school secretary or school principal
* Children will enter and exit the school via allocated entry and exit points.
* Visitors need to hand sanitise on entry.
* All visitors should wear face coverings.
* All visitors to the school will sign in and out using the school contact log (see Appendix 4) Visitors should provide their own pens. This will facilitate the prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals. This 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.
* Where possible, it is preferable that meetings between parents and teachers will be held remotely.
* Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.
* The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.
* The Data Protection Commission has provided guidance on the data protection implications of the return to work protocols. This advice can be found here: https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/newsmedia/data-protection-implications-return-work-safely-protocol
* All school records and data must be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with Castlesampson N.S. in its role as data controller.

**5.) Control Measures –To prevent Introduction and spread of Covid-18 in Schools**

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-student and must be managed in all settings.

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 and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

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

Staff 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.

**Minimising the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Castlesampson N.S.**

* + We will promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (details at Section 5.1);
    - * High temperature
      * Cough
      * Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
      * Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

* + Staff and pupils that have symptoms are advised not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
  + Staff and pupils are advised not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
  + Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school are advised to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly.
  + Staff and pupils will be informed of the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school (details at Section 8);
  + Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
  + Essential visitors to the school during the day will be by prior arrangement. This will usually mean arranging an appointment through the school secretary. Visitors will be received at the main entrance, where they will wait until met by the school secretary or school principal and sign the contact form.
  + Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors.
  + All visitors to the school will be asked to wear a face covering in line with guidance issues to schools Guidance for Primary Schools & Special Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment

**5.1) Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

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

**5.2) Respiratory Hygiene**

We will make sure that every member of the school is reminded to follow good respiratory hygiene. This means:

* Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze.
* Disposing of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.

By following good respiratory hygiene, we can all protect the people around us from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

**5.3) Hand Hygiene**

Staff and pupils will understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Our school will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. We will follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing: ***https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-towash-your-hands.html***

**How to wash your hands with soap and water**

1. Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap.

2. Rub your hands together palm to palm until the soap forms a lather.

3. Rub the back of one hand with your palm and fingers spread so you wash between fingers. Repeat with the other hand.

4. Interlock the top of your hands and rub your fingertips - this cleans your fingertips and knuckles.

5. Then finally grasp your thumb tightly and twist to make sure your thumbs are cleaned. Repeat with the other hand.

6. This should take at least 20 seconds.

7. Rinse your hands under running water.

8. Dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel.

* Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
* We will manage the use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.
* There will be a soap dispenser and wash hand basin, with warm running water in each classroom.
* There will also be a paper towel dispenser in each classroom with a foot pedal bin to hold used towels. These will be emptied each day.
* There will be wall-mounted sanitising units at entrance to the Junior Classroom and adjacent to the entrance to the Senior Room. Each child will have a mini sanitising bottle in their box on the table to use as requested during the day. This will be refilled from the school supply. Each staff member will also have their own sanitiser.
* A wall mounted hand sanitiser unit will be placed between Ms Kelly’s room and the office.
* In order to facilitate more efficient entry into the school, each teacher will also be equipped with a hand held sanitiser for dispensing by the teacher.
* There will be a sanitising unit outside each access door which will be sanitised and covered each evening.
* Children will be required to wash their hands after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

o Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities will be provided in all toilets and kitchenette.

o Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and hand towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them. **The school care taker will have responsibility for this.**

o Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be laminated and placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.

o Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

o Evidence of effectiveness is best for alcohol-based hand rubs but non-alcohol based hand rubs can be used too.

o When hand rubs/gels are being used in school care should be taken to ensure that pupils do not ingest them as they are flammable and toxic.

o Young children will not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel and may only use under supervision.

**Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

* On arrival at school;
* Before eating or drinking;
* After using the toilet;
* After playing outdoors;
* When their hands are physically dirty;
* When they cough or sneeze.
* Before leaving the building to go home.

The Department has arranged for a drawdown framework to be established to enable schools purchase hand-sanitisers and any other necessary PPE supplies for use in the school. The school has made an initial purchase of requirements from local suppliers and shops, having received three quotations and will engage with the procurement process in the future if it is better value then. We will also be guided by the Guidance for Primary Schools & Special Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment issued by the DES on August 7th.

“It is recommended that teachers and staff in primary schools wear a face-covering when a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff or children cannot be maintained.

“In certain situations the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

**5.4) Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing will be usefully applied in our school setting allowing for some flexibility when needed. It will be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning. Care will be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times.

It is also recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

* **However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m.**
* **They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.**

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation

- Decreasing interaction

***Increasing separation***

The guidance documents provided by the Department of Education on optimal school layout and referenced at Section 4.5 above will be used by our school to increase separation to the greatest degree possible.

**To maintain physical distancing in the classroom our school will**

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing

2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing. (This is laid out in section 4.5)

Funding will be used where appropriate under the enhanced minor works grant to facilitate this classroom re-configuration works.

**The teacher’s desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks. This area will be marked by tape as described in section 4.5**

**Decreasing *interaction***

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in our school will depend on the school setting and a common-sense approach is required recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between pupils.

* **In our school 1m will be maintained between desks or between individual pupils from 3rd – 6th class.**
* **It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore this 1m distance will not be required from Infants – 2nd class.**
* Where possible work stations should be allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces which are shared.
* Sometimes, where necessary, teachers may structure pupils into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or “Pods” within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical. In the Junior Classroom there will be a pod of Junior Infants, a pod of Senior Infants and a pod of 1st/2nd classes. In the Senior room 3rd class will form a pod, 4th class will form a pod and 5th/ 6th will be a single pod.
* If the class is divided into Pods, there should be at least (1m distance) between individual Pods within the Class Bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible.
* Generally speaking, the objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible.
* The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.
* Pod sizes will be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context.
* To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff will consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times and there will be some flexibility with younger classes and SEN.
* Each different class bubble will or have separate areas at break or meal times. Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided/minimised where possible.
* Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible.
* All classes will enter the school through a designated entrance, through a designated route and in a staggered manner.

Staggered opening times

As outlined in section 4.5

There will be minimal interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas as only one class will be moving through an area at a time. Black and yellow tape will be used to divide the seat in the hallway to define the part of the hall assigned to each group i.e. (Ms Larkins’s class and Mrs Naughton’s class.)

* Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged.
* Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it will be organized by the teacher to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource. Teachers will practise these procedures and routines with the children in the opening days of school.
* Staff and pupils will avoid sharing of personal items. Each pupil will be supplied a box/basket. They will keep all their requisites/ books in this box.
* Pupils will be encouraged to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth, thumb-sucking).
* Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged. Children will not be using iPads in pairs. Children will not be allowed to collect or transport the iPads throughout the school.

**Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school**

***School drop off/collection***

***The drop off time has been extended by 5 minutes to commence at 9 am.***

***Children from 1st -6th classes should walk to the stile and proceed to their specified entrance as has been the practice in the past. They should drop their schoolbags into the classroom and head outside if it isn’t raining. On wet days they should stay in their classroom.***

***Junior Infants and Senior Infants: Parents take your child to the stile where a member of staff will be waiting to bring your child into the school.***

We ask that only one parent accompany each child.

(Please ensure that all property is clearly labelled/named)

Parents should not congregate at the school gates and social distancing of 2 metres must apply. Children are encouraged to walk from their cars. If parents need to go to the gate, they must wear a mask and socially distance 2m.

**Staff**

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the kitchen/staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed. Physical distancing will be observed between staff members. Staff meetings should be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. School staff are not encouraged to gather at the beginning or end of the school day. Staff can rotate between areas/classes but this should be minimized where possible e.g. The SET will work in the Junior Room in the morning and in the Senior Room in the afternoon. Senior pupil’s SNA will cover for Junior pupil’s SNA while she is having lunch.

**Corridors**

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.

**Yard/Supervision**

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. Entrance and exits from outdoors breaks will be organised to minimise crowding at the entrance and exits. It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary or special schools play together outdoors, but in so far as practical it is helpful to keep to consistent groups. Children will wash their hands before eating pre break and lunch and will sanitise their hands on returning to class. Equipment played with at lunchtime will be put into a storage container and sanitised by the S.N.A’s after use.

**5.5) Use of PPE in Schools.**

Guidance for Primary Schools & Special Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment which was issued by the DES on August 7th contains the following advice which we are guided by:

The Interim Guidance for the use of face-coverings in childcare and educational settings provided by the HPSC on 6th August 2020 makes the following recommendations for use of face-coverings in childcare and educational settings “It is not recommended that children attending primary school or preschool/childcare settings wear face-coverings. “It is recommended that teachers and staff in primary schools wear a face-covering when a physical distance of 2 meters from other staff or children cannot be maintained. “In certain situations the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties”

*Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups*:

* Primary school or pre-school children.
* Any person with difficulty breathing.
* Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated.
* Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance.
* Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity

“Schools should consider having additional disposable face coverings available for students, teachers, and staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day.

” Whilst staff may wish to utilize their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools should have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings, or if appropriate face visors, available for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

The school will have a “pack‟ of relevant PPE on hand to be able to respond to such event in line with the guidance in the COVID-19 Response Plan, including PPE for cleaning/disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present.

**PPE for Staff (as required**)

The school will ensure that any PPE requirements for staff, as required under the Roadmap, public health advice and COVID-19 Response Plan, is readily available for staff. On the use of face masks by staff, the school will consider the specific circumstances where the use of medical face masks, to EU Standard EN 14683, may be more appropriate for staff (for example where staff by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs such as SNAs).

For a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly 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 should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

**Advice on how to properly use face coverings can be found here. *Guidance on safe use of face coverings (gov.ie)***

**Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings or first aid. Routine use 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.

Each member of staff will be provided with a box containing PPE and cleaning equipment as follows:

* Face masks (Disposable)
* Gloves (For first Aid and in intimate care settings)
* Anti-bacterial wipes
* Aprons
* Visor/ goggles
* Antibacterial spray
* Hand sanitising gel

While these will be replenished regularly, it will be the responsibility of each staff member to let the caretaker know if and when additional requisites are needed.

**6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities**

**We will take our pupils outdoors as much as possible and where appropriate for movement breaks and/or for curricular learning. This will be weather dependent,**

Tin whistle: There will be no tin whistle lessons for the first term. We will have recitation and jingles in class but there won’t be any choral singing.

**Sport Activities**

We will refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport.

Link to return to sport protocols is found here for guidance. https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/ In line with the ‟Returning to school Curriculum guidance for primary school leaders and teachers‟‟ p. 18, we endorse the following: Pupils‟ physical education is a central part of their wellbeing: it should form a significant component of timetabled programmes upon returning to school. We will emphasise strands such as Athletics or outdoor and adventure activities with particular focus on the strand units of running, jumping, throwing and orienteering. Games may also provide suitable learning experiences. We will choose learning experiences where pupils can work individually or in small groups (for example, in their pods) with minimal equipment. We will promote physical activity and movement of a non-contact nature. Opportunities for both indoor and outdoor activity will be exploited during break-times, transitions, play, PE lessons, and across curricular areas. During PE lessons we will continue to ensure all pupils engage in aerobic activities as well as skill development, with an emphasis on fundamental movement skills. We will actively encourage pupils to be creative, to cooperate with others, to create and modify games, to solve problems, make decisions, engage in peer and self-assessment, and to reflect as part of the planned physical education programme.

**SPHE and Wellbeing**

Each pupil will start or return to school with his/her own experience of the Covid-19 pandemic. The wider physical, mental, emotional and relationship implications of social distancing, lockdown and possibly bereavement may be significant for some pupils. There will therefore be a focus on wellbeing as a foundation for learning. Teachers will play an important role in supporting positive interactions and routines for the children and in encouraging healthy behaviours as the pupils make sense of their new realities and come to feel safe and secure in their school surroundings. SPHE is particularly important in responding to how Covid-19 has impacted on children in terms of their feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

Learning experiences that support children to focus on their strengths, positive attributes and qualities to enable reconnection with the school community will assist in easing the transition back to school. SPHE curriculum content will also be useful in providing general and specific support to pupils who are finding the transition back to school difficult. While teachers will be best placed to consider what aspects of their SPHE programme should be prioritised or revisited in light of the particular context of their class or pupils, we will definitely focus on some of the following Strand Units:

* Self-identity
* Taking care of my body
* Growing and changing
* Safety and protection
* My friends and my family
* Developing citizenship

Particular attention will be given to:

* The importance of personal hygiene and how to wash hands thoroughly, coughing/sneezing according to the medical guidance, and how and when to wear face coverings/masks
* Supporting pupils in managing their feelings, resolving conflicts and coping with uncertainty, as well as new situations brought about by Covid-19 such as loss of a loved one
* Revisiting the Stay Safe Programme or Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
* Allowing pupils adequate time to re-connect with one another and to (re)establish relationships with peers. Co-operative games and the incorporation of drama activities such as role play and improvisation can support this process.
* Providing children with opportunities to talk about and make sense of their experiences The school SPHE policy will be updated to reflect this new curricular timetable.

**Shared Equipment**: A period of 72 hours must pass before a new class can use the same materials. Materials/ toys need to be either left for a period of 72 hours or cleaned before another group in the same class uses them The same rules will apply to maths manipulative. **Toys** : All toys should be cleaned on a regular basis for example weekly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs. Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal. When purchasing toys choose ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary). If cloth or soft toys are used they should be machine washable. Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils to those with special educational needs may be inclined to put into their mouths should be capable of being washed and disinfected. All play equipment should be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned they should be discarded. Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer’s instructions should always be followed. At this time soft modelling materials and play dough where used should be for individual use only. Each child in Junior and Senior Infants will be given their own labelled tub of playdough.

**Cleaning Procedure for Toys**

* Wash the toy in warm soapy water, using a brush to get into crevices.
* Rinse the toy in clean water.
* Thoroughly dry the toy.
* Toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried.
* In some situations toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning for example: toys/equipment that pupils place in their mouths. Toys/equipment that have been soiled with blood or body fluids or toys where a case of COVID-19 has been identified.
* If disinfection is required: A chlorine releasing disinfectant should be used diluted to a concentration of 1,000 ppm available chlorine. The item should be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

**Art**

Where possible pupils will be provided with individual art and equipment supplies.

**Electronics**

Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use and consideration could be given to the use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning.

**Musical Equipment/Instruments**

Instruments will not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments , duplicate booksshould be cleaned between uses.

Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Pupils will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

All copies and books should have wipeable covers. We will use our Seesaw App, extra books and photocopied sheets to provide duplicate copies of texts pupils may need for homework thus reducing the need for the movement of books to and from each day. Written homework will be completed in school for September.

**Shared Sports Equipment**

The sharing of sports equipment will be minimised. Shared equipment will be cleaned by the teacher after use.

**7) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

* Funding has been allocated to schools to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19. The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and will be covered in the induction training. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected cases of COVID-19. Schools are asked to carefully read and understand the cleaning advice and to apply that to all areas of the school as appropriate.
* Our school will take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for hand washing and toilet facilities.
* Our school setting will be cleaned at least once per day.
* Additional cleaning if available will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs, 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 will thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
* There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from the office and other areas within the school facility.
* Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils and store in the box provided or bring their own to and from school. (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)
* Classrooms will be aired at breaktime, lunchtime and again at hometime.

**Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present**

* The room should be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.
* Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
* Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.
* Person assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.
* Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).
* Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
* Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.
* If a pupil or staff member diagnosed with COVID-19, spent time in a communal area like a kitchen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

**8) Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. (Disabled Toilet) The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 has been considered and to facilitate that, screens will be erected. Additional cases will use the sensory room. The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils. It is also close to the exit door and the secretary’s office.

**If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented**:

* If a teacher in a classroom, has a suspected case of covid / recognised symptoms, they must alert the principal or the school secretary.
* If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately;
* The person will be isolated and accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by their teacher principal keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person, wearing a mask if applicable and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times.

***Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room;***

* If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
* The person presenting with symptoms is provided with a mask. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
* The principal/ deputy will assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;
* The person presenting with symptoms will be facilitated to remain in isolation if they cannot immediately go home. They will also be facilitated to call their doctor if necessary. The individual will be reminded and encouraged to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice will be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
* If the person is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and they will be advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
* If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, 999 or 112 will be contacted and informed that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect;
* The principal/ deputy will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
* Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved (details at Section 7).

**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 followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.**

**9) Special Educational Needs**

Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school. Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

**Hand hygiene**

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.

**Equipment**

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

The following points can guide the development of such cleaning schedule:

* Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean;
* Care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Cleaning is generally achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water.
* Equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child e.g. toileting aids;
* If equipment is soiled with body fluids:
* First clean thoroughly with detergent and water;
* Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant.
* Rinse with water and dry.

**10) Staff Duties**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. 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. In this regard and 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.  Complete the RTW form before they return to work (By the 23rd of August)
* Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, 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.
* 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 at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
* Not return to 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.
* Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

**11) COVID-19 related Absence Management**

The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education. Circular 0049/2020 These can be accessed here: ***Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools.***

**Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for school staff wellbeing will be 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. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum.Life under the logo of “Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile‟.

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 COVID-19 School Policy Statement

Appendix 2 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

Appendix 3 Lead Worker Representative

Appendix 4 School Contact Tracing Log

Appendix 5 Checklist for School Managers

Appendix 6 Checklist for Managing a Suspected Case of COVID-19

Appendix 7 Checklist for Lead Worker Representative

Appendix 8 Checklist for Cleaning

Appendix 9 Risk Assessment (To be added at a later date)

Appendix 10: School Map of Entrances/ Exits

**Appendix 1: Castlesampson N.S Policy Statement**

Castlesampson National School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

We will:

* continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
* provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
* display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct handwashing techniques
* agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
* inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
* adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
* keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
* ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
* implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
* provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
* implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Fr. Sean Neylon, Chairperson BoM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 2 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19 (PRW)**

**This questionnaire must be completed by staff at least 3 days in advance of returning to work. (23rd August) If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Name of School:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of Principal : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Questions Yes No | | | |
| 1. | Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days? |  |  |
| 2. | Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days? |  |  |
| 3. | Have you been advised by the H.S.E. that you are a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or a suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days? |  |  |
| 4. | Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time? |  |  |
| 5. | Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time? |  |  |
| 6. | Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high risk group?  If yes, please liaise with Principal re return to work and follow the agreed DES arrangements for very high risk groups. |  |  |

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements. Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Schools Appendix 3 Lead Worker Representative – Primary and Special**

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour Employer Economic Forum. The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace. The purpose of this section is to set out the provisions in respect of the LWR in schools. The operation of these arrangements will be kept under review by the parties.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

* the COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol;
* the ***Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19;***
* COVID-19 Response Plan for Primary and Special Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

**Collaborative Approach**

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management/ Education and Training Board and school management. Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work. If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management.

**2. Role of the Lead Worker**

* Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
* Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
* Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
* In conjunction with school management, 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 school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
* In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
* Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
* Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
* Consult with the school management on the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
* Following any incident assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
* Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
* Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

**What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?**

The LWR may consult with, and make representations to, school management on any issue of concern in relation to COVID-19. These include issues in relation to:

* Cleaning protocols and their implementation
* Physical Distancing
* Implementation of one-way systems in the school to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the school
* Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
* Hand sanitising
* Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the school
* Respiratory hygiene
* Personal Protective Equipment
* At Risk Group
* Visitors/Contractors

**Lead Worker Representative**

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative**.**

1. **Deputy Lead Worker Representative/ Assistant Lead Worker** **Representative**

In schools with less than 30 staff, a Deputy Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Deputy LWR will be to deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent. In schools with 30 or more staff and in all Special schools, an Assistant Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Assistant LWR will be to:

* assist the LWR in their duties as set out above; and
* deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

1. **Selection of Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR**

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR, Deputy LWR and Assistant LWR positions as appropriate. The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR represents all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, if a teacher is selected for the role of LWR, then the Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR should be selected from the non-teaching staff where feasible and vice versa. The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR as appropriate should be arrived at by consultation and consensus at school level, through the seeking of volunteers to act in that capacity. Where there is more than one volunteer, all school staff should vote to select the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR. The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the employer. LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have completed the provided training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

1. **Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR**

The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR shall be entitled to: 

* Receive information and training in respect of their role [further detail to be provided];
* Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19;
* Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19;
* Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures;

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a teacher (including a postholder), the 10 Croke Park hours which can currently be used for planning on other than a whole school basis will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is an SNA, 10 of the “72 hours” will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role. Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a Secretary or Caretaker, a re-prioritisation of duties by school management should be carried out to afford the staff member sufficient time to carry out their duties in that role.

1. **Procedure for dealing with issues that arise**

Where an issue of concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal. Staff should be informed of the outcome. If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR may notify the Board of Management (Chairperson of the BoM in the first instance)/ Education and Training Board head office of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the BoM/ETB head office. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

**Glossary of Terms**

* COVID-19 Response Plan: plan designed to support the staff and BOM/ ETB in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for Primary and Special Schools are available on the Department’s website.
* Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF): the forum for high level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters of strategic national importance - involves the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Government & Employers.
* Return to Work Protocol: national protocol designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
* Safety Representative: Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the selection and role of the Safety Representative in the workplace. The rights of the Safety
* Representative are set out in legislation. (Note: A Safety Representative has rights and not duties under the 2005 Act). This role is separate to the LWR under COVID-19.