**Gaelscoil Chnoc Liamhna**

**COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening of the School**

**Information for Parents**

**Introduction**

The aim of this plan is to outline the measures that must be put in place in our school to **(a) reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering the school and (b) in the event of COVID-19 entering the school, prevent it spreading. A community effort is required so that the school can open safely and remain open. Every effort will be made to protect the health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff.**

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 pupils, staff and others. **In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our school requires a shared collaborative approach between the board of management, staff, pupils and parents. The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.**

As the advice issued by NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change. The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take new guidance into account.

**Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

* **Induction Training** will be undertaken by staff prior to the return to the workplace. Induction training is being developed by the Department of Education and will be available to all schools.
* In order to return to school, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form. The RTW form should be completed and returned 3 days prior to returning to school.
* A **Lead Worker Representative** will be appointed from amongst the staff to ensure that COVID-19 measures are adhered to in the school.

**Changes to school Layout/Physical Distancing**

* The hall and library/computer room will be used as classrooms.
* One classroom will be used for storage.
* Larger classes will occupy the biggest rooms.
* Excess furniture/shelving will be removed from classrooms to increase space.
* The principal and secretary will be in separate offices.
* The room next to the office will be used as an isolation room.
* Each class will be divided into pods of 5/6 pupils.
* The teacher’s table will be 1m from the pupils.
* 1m distance between each pod in the class bubble.
* Pupils interacting with those in their class group only.
* Four classes in the yard at one time, each occupying a quarter of the yard.
* Parents/guardians of Infants and Rang a 1 will collect their children at the gate. Pupils in Rang a 2 – Rang a 6 will be collected in the lane. Parents/guardians are asked to choose a specific place in the lane to meet their child(ren) and to explain to their children that they should come to this spot when leaving the school.
* October information meetings will be replaced by information for parents on our website.
* Staff/Visitors maintaining a 2m distance from each other.

**Access to School**

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

**Visitors**

* Visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have made a prior appointment with principal.
* Every visitor must wear a mask.
* The visitor will be met at the office by the secretary or principal.
* The visitor must sign in and, if necessary, later sign out in the office.
* A contact log will be kept in a secure place in the office.
* Staff and visitors should maintain a 2m distance from each other.
* No hand shaking policy.

**Reducing the Risk of COVID-19 Entering the School by:**

* **Staff and** **pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases must not attend school.** They should phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.
* **Staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID19 must not attend school** and should follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
* Everyone entering the school building should perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
* Visits to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and visitors will be received at the office.
* Mats with disinfectant will be provided at every entry point.
* **Pupils should change out of their school uniforms as soon as they arrive home.**

**Reducing the Spread of COVID-19**

**Respiratory Hygiene**

* Please remind your children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their bent elbow when they cough or sneeze.
* Please remind your children to dispose of used tissues in the pedal bin which will be provided in each classroom.

**Hand Hygiene**

* Warm water available in each classroom.
* Liquid soap and sanitiser available in every room.
* Hand sanitiser available at the school entrance.
* Posters illustrating proper hand washing on display in each classroom.
* Discussions with pupils on proper hand washing.
* Single use paper towels available throughout the school.
* Pupils from Rang a 3 to Rang a 6 are asked to bring a bag containing a small towel and small bottle of sanitiser to school.
* Please remind your children to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.

**Proper hand hygiene**

* On arrival at school
* Before eating or drinking
* After using the toilet
* After playing outdoors
* When hands are physically dirty
* When a person coughs or sneezes

**Children Arriving to School in the Morning**

Arrivals will be staggered according to surname in alphabetical order. Parents will receive further communication about this.

8.40 – 8.50 A – D

8.50 – 9.00 E – L

9.00 – 9.10 M – Z

Infants, Rang 1 and Rang 2 come in via the side gate nearest the road.

Rang 3 to Rang 6 come in via the other side gate.

**Children going Home**

1.30 Infants walk in two lines to the gate. One by one a parent/guardian enters through the gate beside the shed, collects the child(ren) and exits via the other side gate.

2.20 Rang 1 will be collected at the gate, parent/guardian follows the same procedure as above.

2.25 Rang 2 walks to the gate and exits via the two side gates.

2.30 Rang 3 and Rang 4 walk in two lines and exit via the two side gates.

2.40 Rang 5 and Rang 6 walk in two lines and exit via the two side gates.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

* Mask will be worn by every visitor/parent who comes to the school.
* Mask or visor will be worn by every member of staff.
* PPE (gloves, mask, apron) will be worn when**: (1)** **assisting with intimate care needs (2) where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation (3) 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.**

**Shared Equipment**

* Staff will use and clean their own equipment and utensils.
* Equipment will not be shared between pods.
* Within the pod, children will not share books, water bottles, playdough etc.
* Toys which cannot be washed after use will be removed from the classroom.
* Toys will be cleaned with disinfectant spray after each use.
* Each child’s belongings must be clearly labelled.
* Children keep their books, pencils etc. in a mesh bag which they do not take home.

**Hygiene and Cleaning**

* School will be deep cleaned before it reopens.
* Classrooms, staff room, offices, toilets will be thoroughly cleaned after school each day.
* Cleaning materials available and safely stored in each classroom so teachers can keep their own work areas clean.
* Tables, chairs, door handles etc. will be cleaned each morning and at the end of the school day.
* Chromebooks, computers, photocopying machine must be cleaned after each use.
* Used tissues and paper towels will be disposed of in covered pedal bins.
* Children must wash their hands if books or equipment are shared within pods.

**Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID19 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, 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 diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area or if they used the toilet 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.

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

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

If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately.

Isolate the person. Accompany the individual to the designated isolation area keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times.

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 must wear a mask.

The secretary will call the parent/guardian (**it is essential that parents provide a phone number** **at which they can be immediately contacted**). The parent/guardian should call their doctor and the pupil should continue self isolation at home.

The pupil should remain in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and their doctor should be called.

The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should 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 they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.

Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

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 will be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times

**Changes to School Activities**

* Instead of sending homework home, time will be allocated at the start and before the end of the school day to complete this work.
* Groupwork such as Literacy Liftoff and Reidh, Socair, Dein will not take place in September (review at end of September)
* Visiting teachers will not come in to teach music, choir, dancing at the beginning of the school year (review at end of October).
* Tin whistle classes cannot be conducted.
* After school activities cannot take place under current circumstances.
* As classes must be kept apart, school assemblies will not take place.
* Children will remain in their pods during PE classes.
* Music lessons must take account of the risk of spreading COVID-19.

**Summary**

* It is necessary to make an appointment before coming to the school.
* Mask to be worn when coming to the school.
* Children should stay at home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.
* Children should change out of their uniform as soon as they arrive home.
* All of the children’s possessions should be clearly labelled.
* A phone number at which a parent/guardian can be immediately contacted must be provided.
* Please provide a mask (child size) in your child’s schoolbag.
* If your child forgets to bring lunch to school, the lunchbox can be placed in a box inside the school gate.
* It is important that children are collected on time.

**Returning to School**

**Thursday, August 27th Senior Infants, R1, R2 will return**

**Friday, August 28th All classes from Senior Infants to Rang 6 in school.**

**Monday, August 31st Junior Infants will start.**

**August 31st to September 4th Junior Infants come to school at 9.30am.**

**August 31st to September 11th Junior Infants go home at 12.00 noon.**

**From September 14th onwards, Junior Infants go home at 1.30pm.**