

Covid-19 Response Plan

This plan was updated in August 2021 in response to the DES COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools.

Procedures and guidelines in this plan are relevant to all staff, pupils and visitors to the school.

Symptoms of Covid-19:

Although some people with no signs or symptoms can be infectious, people are generally most infectious for others when they have symptoms and signs of the infection.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE [Website](#).

Reminders for staff and parents:

1. Staff and pupils should not return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - If they have symptoms of Covid. (They should phone their doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation).
 - If they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
2. Staff and pupils who develop symptoms at school should bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly.
3. Staff, parents and pupils should cooperate with any public health personnel and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.
4. Staff, parents and pupils should undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.
5. Staff, parents and pupils should be aware of the general advice they should follow outside of the educational setting to lower the risk that they become infected with Covid-19.
6. Staff should be alert for any signs of illness that suggests that they, a pupil or a colleague may have Covid-19 on arrival for school and throughout the day.
7. Everyone entering or exiting the school building should perform hand hygiene (by washing hands or using a hand sanitiser).
8. Everyone entering or exiting vehicles should perform hand hygiene (by washing hands or using a hand sanitiser).

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing will be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

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.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene:

As noted in the Public Health Advice “Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a sanitiser (when hands look clean)”.

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.

Staff will support hand hygiene practices to pupils who need assistance.

PPE:

it is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- Performing intimate care
- 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 in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category
- Administering first aid

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

It is not recommended that our pupils wear PPE.

Enhanced cleaning schedule:

In addition to the usual school cleaning schedule, there will be on-site cleaning throughout the day to clean commonly shared areas eg staffroom, toilets, children's tables, printers etc. The focus will be on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, keypads etc.

This enhanced cleaning schedule will work around children's yard breaks.

Ventilation:

Windows in classrooms are opened before 8 am each morning. Where possible, teachers will leave the classroom door ajar and keep windows open (yard noise and cold weather may preclude this).

Windows and doors should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of the school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use.

The above practical measures will be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) monitors.

Office/Reception:

Parents will not be permitted to enter the school without an appointment.

If a boy forgets his lunch a parent should inform the office of this by phone and arrangements will be made.

Principal's office:

Any informal meetings should take place on opposite sides of room, wearing masks.

Informal meetings should take no longer than 15 minutes.

The area will be cleaned afterwards.

Isolation for people who develop symptoms or signs of Covid-19 in the educational setting:

1. The isolation area is in the foyer with screens for privacy.
2. A mask should be provided for the person presenting with symptoms.
3. Staff members who accompany a symptomatic pupil to the designated isolation area should wear a face covering or mask and keep at least 2m away from the symptomatic person (and also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times).
4. Staff should 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.
5. Staff will facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. 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.

6. If the person is well enough to go home, staff will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.

7. If the symptomatic person is too unwell to go home or advice is required, staff should contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

8. The isolation area and work areas involved will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

9. The school will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.

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.

Daily routines:

Morning assembly:

Boys are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school in order to reduce parking/congregation outside the school during this interim phase or at any stage.

Parents are not permitted to enter school. Staff engagement should be requested through the school and will be provided by telephone or email.

Staggered entry by year groups as follows:

8.40 Senior Infants and 2nd class

8.50 1st Class (and Junior Infants after initial settling in period).

Brothers/boys sharing lifts or walking to school together may enter school together.

Both main gate (infant classes) and gate adjacent to pond (1st and 2nd classes) are open every morning.

One parent/guardian should drop boys at their nearest school gate on Seafield Road and move off quickly to avoid congestion.

SBS boys should not enter via JBS gate.

Boys should walk to their respective classes from yard. Staff will be on hand to supervise boys making their way from the gate to their classrooms.

Boys should sanitize hands before entering the school building. (Supervising staff will monitor this and ensure there is no congestion at sanitizers).

Class teachers remain in classrooms from 8.40am to receive boys.

Pods:

Boys in our school setting may sit and work in close proximity to a small group known as a pod. The office will have lists of boys in each pod for contact tracing purposes if necessary.

On arriving at school, each boy goes straight to his pod and must remain in the same pod for the duration of the school day.

Teachers will ensure a minimum distance of 1m between pods and 1m from teacher's table. (2m if possible)

Coats go into a box under each pod.

Working in classrooms:

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.

Teachers will avoid activities that involve movement/interaction between pods.

Staff should limit the sharing of items between members of pods in so far as is practical, especially in respect to items that pupils may put in their mouth.

Staff will pay particular attention to the management and the risk of Covid-19 to school activities such as those associated with art, toys, books, sports equipment etc.

Access to other areas of the school:

Apart from yard breaks, boys will be in their pods in classrooms for the school day.

Visiting the library is not an option for the foreseeable future.

Staff using the Sensory Room will use a sign-in book for contact tracing purposes and SNA/teacher will wipe down the room thoroughly after use.

Toilets:

Doors to ensuite toilets should be left open at all times. Teachers will ensure a maximum of 1 boy in toilet unless 2 boys are from the same pod.

Toilets for R14 – boys will use the toilets on the corridor to the hall.

R15- boys use toilets at top of main corridor.

Parents should ensure their son has a change of clothing (underpants, trousers and socks) in the event of a toileting accident or wetting.

Lunches:

Boys must wash/sanitise hands before eating.

Pod tables are sanitized before and after eating.

No sharing of lunches (as per usual).

Parents must ensure that boys are able to open and close lunch boxes, drinks bottles and that they can manage to unwrap all lunch items eg peel oranges, bananas, open frubes etc to ensure they are the only ones handling their food.

Milk will be discontinued.

No food should be brought to yard.

Boys must wash/sanitise hands after eating and before going to yard.

Yard:

Boys should be able to put on and zip up their own coats. Ditto jumpers.

Yard will be cordoned off into 3 separate sections using barriers. Boys must not climb on or touch the barriers.

Year groups will share break times.

Each class will be given a designated zone in which to play, and boys may interact with everyone else in their class (bubble) while in yard.

No toys or materials to be used in yard.

Polydrons as reward for 'line of the week' will always have a minimum of 72 hours quarantine between use by classes.

Water fountain not in use.

Yard toilets: Staff will encourage boys to go to the toilet before breaks. Access through other bubbles is an issue so yard toilets may be used by the boys only in emergency situations.

Wet day breaks:

Boys must remain in their pods. Supervision by same roster as yard.

Separate communal activities (eg lego) may be used for each pod.

Solas yard:

Room 11 will use the garden near the pond for breaks.

Anaphylaxis emergency:

Any staff member (regardless of class bubble) may administer medication or Anapen/Epipen should the need arise.

Homework:

The Seesaw app will be used for posting homework and for communicating with parents where necessary. Please check in on a regular basis.

Guided reading:

When guided readers are sent home, we ask that parents and boys are particularly mindful of the need to keep these in pouches provided when not in use.

Dismissal:

This will be staggered by year groups to prevent congestion. A one-way system will be in operation.

One collector per boy enters through old blue gates, goes through hall and out top corridor door into yard. Boys are in usual collection areas. Collector makes contact with teacher as usual (from a distance of 2m) and moves off quickly through main gate.

If there is a delay in collecting a boy, the boy must remain with his class teacher.

Collection times:

1.10 Senior Infants

1.20 Junior Infants (from Monday 13th September)

2.10 2nd Class

2.20 1st Class

Where possible creches/collectors with groups of children should be encouraged to avoid bringing large groups with them into yard- they should set up a minding arrangement outside the school.

Communication with staff:

If there is an issue that a parent or teacher needs to discuss, this should not be addressed in the yard, but contact by phone/email should be made later in the afternoon.

Homework notices will be posted on Seesaw.

Contingency plan for closure:

The Seesaw learning platform will be used for distance learning in the event of a class or school closure due to a Covid-19 outbreak.

Checklist for parents prior to reopening.

- Please ensure all your contact details are up to date.
- Ensure your son is able to wash and dry his hands correctly. School will provide paper towels for drying hands.
- School will provide hand sanitizer. Young children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel so please do not send any sanitiser with your son.
- Only essential items to be brought to school. No toys, pencils, books, show-and-tell items etc.
- Ensure your son can put his coat on and off, zip up and down unaided.
- Ditto for school jumper. Practise self-care skills with your son.
- Label jumper clearly using a readily-identifiable mark if your son is unable to read his name.
- No shoe-laces unless your son is proficient at tying laces. Velcro shoes preferable.
- Ensure your son is well able to manage his lunch. Practise opening/closing lunch-box and drinks bottle. Do not give lunches with packaging that your son cannot manage independently (frubes, cheese strings, sealed plastic packets, cartons etc), and if sending oranges or bananas make sure your son can peel them independently.
- Ensure lunch box and drinks bottles are thoroughly washed every day.
- Parents will not be permitted to enter the school without an appointment.
- If your son forgets his lunch you may advise the school of this by phone and make arrangements.

- Staff will not have the usual daily interaction with parents so if you have a concern, or if you would like to speak to his teacher please contact via email.
- Assess symptoms every morning.
- If your child displays one symptom of Covid-19 please do not send him to school and contact your GP
- Do not send a child to school after contact with a confirmed case.
- Where possible, put in place emergency childcare supports.
- Always heed public health advice and warnings.
- Talk to your child about the changes encountered when returning to school.
- Where possible walk, cycle or scoot to school to reduce congestion at the school gates.