

Scoil Mhuire

COVID-19 SCHOOL RESPONSE PLAN

Revised October 2021

INTRODUCTION

This *Revised COVID-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) of Scoil Mhuire in putting measures in place that will continue to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our school. The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the 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 (NPHE), the Department of Education and Skills and the Health Service Executive (HSE). This revised COVID-19 Response Plan is in line with the DES *Covid-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Operation of Primary and Special Schools* and reflects the information in the *Government's Recovery and Resilience; The Path Ahead* and the *Work Safely Protocol*.

It is important that school-based teaching and learning and the operation of school facilities comply with the Covid-19 Response Plan to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice and guidance issued by NPHE, the HSE and the DES continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

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

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

This document aims to provide details of:

- 1. COVID-19 School Policy**
- 2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School August 2021**
 - a. School Building and Works
 - b. Signage
 - c. Risk Assessment and Update to Safety Statement
- 3. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
 - A. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS INDUCTION TRAINING
 - B. COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN AND COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT
 - C. RETURN TO WORK FORM
- 4. Access to School and Contact Log**
 - A. PARENT ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL PREMISES
 - B. DES/NCSE/NEPS/CAHMS ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL PREMISES
 - C. STUDENT TEACHERS,, SNAS,TY STUDENTS
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- c. Hand Hygiene
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- 10. COVID-19 Related Absence Management**
- 11. Staff Duties**
- 12. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**
- 13. The Impact of COVID-19 on School Procedures and Activities**
- 14. Curricular Focus**
- 15. Contingency Plan in the Event of a Localised School Closure**
- 16. Additional Advice for Parents/Guardians**

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

Note: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from:

www.Gov.ie

www.dbei.ie

www.hse.ie

www.hpsc.ie

www.hsa.ie

www.education.ie

1.	COVID-19 POLICY
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Scoil Mhuire 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 hand-washing 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 DES
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the DES
- 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 DES 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 WR who will be supported in line with the agreement between the DES and education partners. The following WR was appointed a Staff Meeting on Monday 7th August 2020.

Julie Ann Brown
Worker Representative

The Covid-19 Policy Statement is attached as Appendix 1.

2.	PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL AUGUST 2021
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The Board of Management aims to facilitate the continued safe operation of school based teaching and learning. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure the school operates safely and according to the advice and instructions of public health authorities, the DES and the Government.

a. School Buildings and Works

The main school building and all other prefab classrooms were deep-cleaned from 26th to 28th August 2021.

All existing mainstream classrooms have been de-cluttered and arranged so as to allow for the maximum degree of social distancing between in-class Pods and between children within those pods.

Excess furniture and resources from classrooms has been placed in storage.

Compact storage units have been installed in each classroom to enable children to store books and copies that must remain at school, to ensure that desktops are kept clear for cleaning and sanitising each evening Monday to Friday.

The number of coat hooks on the corridors outside classrooms in the main school building has been rearranged and coat hooks have been installed within classrooms to allow for sufficient space between coats and between children who are hanging up coats.

Desks and chairs have been re-arranged within classrooms to ensure that:

- in-class Pods can remain separate from each other
- children within pods can maintain a distance of 1 metre from each other

Hand soap dispensers, hand towel (paper) dispensers and hand sanitiser dispensers are installed in every classroom in the school.

Hand-dryers in toilets are de-commissioned in favour of hand towel (paper) dispensers.

Hand sanitisers have been installed at all doors, outside toilets on the corridor of the main school building, at Reception, in the Staffroom, at various locations throughout the school and at both entrances of the Halla Mór.

The pitch behind the main school building has been divided into 4 sections to provide increased yard space for children at Am Sosa (morning break time) and Am Lóin (afternoon lunch time.) This will have the effect of doubling available yard space from 4 yards to 8 yards.

The Halla Mór continues to function as an Infant Class morning assembly area and afternoon dispersal area. It may also be used occasionally as an additional SEN teaching space. As the Halla Mór affords the maximum potential for indoor social distancing in our school, it will be used for meetings by up to 8 persons, e.g. Board of Management, SEN Team, SNA Team, NEPS Psychologist, etc. The Halla Mór is also available to Infant Classes for PE between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

The COVID-19 Isolation Room (CIR1) (at the rear of the Halla Mór) has been re-purposed Special Education Teaching Room (SET Room) H1. A new COVID-19 Isolation Room has been installed beside the southern gable end of the 2 storey module at the front of the school.

SET Room 10C has been re-commissioned as a one-to-one SEN Base.

A scanner continues to operate at Reception, which will log the time and temperature of all staff members each morning.

Stencils are painted at various locations in the school yards to assist children, staff and parents in orientation and to facilitate orderly, distanced assembly, e.g. in the case of a fire drill.

b. Signage

The school continues to display the following signage throughout the school premises:

- Signs outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Signs promoting appropriate social distancing
- Signs promoting proper coughing/sneezing etiquette and respiratory hygiene
- Signs promoting proper handwashing technique and reminders of the importance of hygiene
- Signs indicating direction of movement and correct exit/entry points
- Signs indicating where to stand, wait, queue, etc.

Insofar as possible, signage displayed throughout the school will be clear, colourful and child-friendly.

c. Risk Assessment and Update to Safety Statement

The school has revised its COVID-19 Risk Assessment for the re-opening of the school on 30th August 2021. The Principal and the Worker Representative attended a meeting with Eugene Nolan of Corrib Safety Consultants on 20th August, subsequent to which a COVID-19 Risk Assessment was conducted. This COVID-19 Risk Assessment reflects Public Health Measures in place at the time. The Risk Assessment is attached as Appendix 2.

3. PROCEDURE FOR RETURNING TO WORK

A. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS INDUCTION TRAINING

An Induction Video from the Department has issued and is available online at: [Department of Education and Skills COVID-19 Induction Video](#). All staff members are required to complete this Induction Video as a necessary prerequisite to returning to work.

B. COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN AND COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT

The COVID-19 Response Plan which was in operation in June 2021 continues to operate, as per DES Guidelines issued to schools on 12th August 2021. The COVID-19 Response Plan is available to parents and staff on the school website:

C. RETURN TO WORK FORM

In order to return to the workplace after the summer holidays, all staff (including Teachers, SNAs and Ancillary Staff) completed a Return to Work (RTW) form. A Return to Work Form is to be completed by staff members before returning to school at the start of every term/half term, and after being absent from school due to illness.

4. ACCESS TO SCHOOL AND CONTACT LOG
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Any and all persons coming onto the school premises must:

- arrange an appointment via the Principal
- come directly to the front door of the main school building and speak to the secretary via the intercom to be admitted
- wear a mask for the duration of their time on the school premises
- fill in and sign the School Contact Tracing Log
- sanitise their hands with the hand-sanitizer provided

A. PARENT ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL PREMISES

Apart from authorised preschool staff and parents/guardians/childminders of children in Junior and Senior Infant Classes, access for all adults apart from school staff will continue to be restricted and by appointment only.

Preschool Staff and Parents/Guardians/Childminders of children in Junior and Senior Infant Classes may convey the children in their care to the Halla Mór and collect them from the Halla Mór each morning during the appointed timeframe. Persons in this category must wear a face mask at all times while on the school premises.

Under no circumstances should parents/guardians/childminders come onto the school premises of their own accord. Access to the school premises between 8:40 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. will only be possible in exceptional cases, e.g. children requiring collection during the school day due to falling ill, sustaining injuries or having toileting accidents.

In the majority of such cases, parents/guardians/childminders will be contacted by the school and asked to come to the school wait outside the school gates for their child to be brought out to them by a staff member.

In exceptional circumstances, parents/guardians/childminders may be asked to come in to the school office or Covid-19 isolation room.

Where items need to be delivered to children at school such as forgotten lunches, drinks, glasses, etc., parents/guardians/childminders must call the school office and arrange for such to be collected by a member of school staff at the gate of the school.

Where children need to be collected early from school, parents/guardians/childminders should give prior notice to the child's class teacher and the school office. Before arrival at the school, parents/guardians/childminders must call the school office and wait outside the school gates for their child to be brought out to them by a staff member.

Meetings with the Principal, Teaching Staff, Special Needs Assistants etc. will be strictly by prior appointment only, between 2:45 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

B. DES/NCSE/NEPS/CAHMS ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL PREMISES

Access by DES Inspectors, NCSE, NEPS etc. will be by prior appointment. Such persons will be permitted to access classrooms and may conduct any meetings required in the Halla Mór.

C. STUDENTS ON TEACHING PRACTICE PLACEMENTS, SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS AND TRANSITION YEAR STUDENTS ON WORK EXPERIENCE

The above persons will be accommodated by prior appointment and subject to all usual relevant arrangements being in place, i.e. Garda Vetting, Statutory Declaration, Insurance, etc.

D. SPORTS COACHES

Sports coaches engaged in outdoor activities will be accommodated by prior appointment and subject to all usual relevant arrangements being in place, i.e. Garda Vetting, Statutory Declaration, Insurance, etc.

E. VISITING TEACHERS

It will not be possible to accommodate visiting teachers within the school buildings for the foreseeable future. This will be reviewed after Christmas.

F. OUTSIDE GROUPS ENGAGING IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Outside groups may be accommodated in making use of the school's outdoor facilities subject to all necessary prerequisites being in place, e.g. Written Agreement, Insurance and Indemnification. It will not be possible to make the school buildings available to outside groups for the foreseeable future. This will be reviewed after Christmas.

G. CONTRACTORS

Contractors, technicians etc. may access the school premises providing they are in compliance with the school's COVID-19 Protocols, i.e. Contact Tracing Log is completed, facemasks are worn indoors, hand sanitiser is used.

The Contact Log will be kept securely and confidentially in the office and will be shredded after 14 days, in compliance with GDPR.

5.	SAFE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL AND LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVES
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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. All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

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.

The following WR was appointed at Staff Meeting on Monday 7th August 2020.

Worker Representative: Julie Ann Brown

The role of the LWR is to ensure that COVID-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- Work collaboratively with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Board of Management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19 in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace
- If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the LWR/ALWR, who will engage with the Principal/BOM
- 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

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

6.	PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19
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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 will 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.

a. Understanding how COVID-19 is Spread

The virus that causes COVID-19 is called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov-2.)

The virus can be contracted by coming into close contact with someone who has the virus, regardless of whether or not he/she is displaying symptoms.

The virus is spread through droplets that come from the nose and mouth, e.g. from someone who is talking loudly, breathing heavily, singing, shouting, coughing or sneezing.

The virus can also be contracted from surfaces, e.g. when someone who has the virus sneezes, droplets containing the virus can fall onto nearby surfaces. Touching that surface and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth could result in infection.

A number of actions can be taken to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as:

- Wearing a face covering such as a mask or visor
- [Social distancing](#)
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- [Proper](#) and regular hand-washing
- Using hand sanitiser on clean hands
- Not touching the eyes, nose or mouth unless hands are clean

The virus can spread easily in crowded environments.

The most effective means of killing the virus on the hands is proper handwashing technique using soap and water.

Common household disinfectants will kill the virus on surfaces. Surfaces should be cleaned first and then sanitised using a disinfectant.

Coronavirus can survive for:

- Up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel

- Less than 4 hours on copper
- Less than 24 hours on cardboard

b. Recognising the Symptoms of COVID-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. The follow are the prevalence of symptoms as they relate to COVID-19, according to the HSE:

High Temperature, Fever, Chills	Common
Cough (usually dry)	Common
Shartness of Breath	Common
Lost/Changed Sense of Taste and/or Smell	Common
Fatigue	Common
Aches and Pains	Common
Sore Throat	Sometimes
Headaches	Sometimes
Stuffy/Runny Nose	Sometimes
Nausea	Sometimes
Diarrhoea	Rare
Sneezing	Not a Symptom

Any concerns or questions you may have regarding the symptoms of COVID-19 or the possibility that either you or a family member may have COVID-19 should be addressed to your General Practitioner.

Pupils or Staff Members who are displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19 MUST NOT ATTEND SCHOOL.

c. Hand Hygiene

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand hygiene practices.

Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of COVID-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

The school has invested in and installed a substantial amount of hand-washing hand-sanitising infrastructure under the DES PPE Procurement Process. Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations on the school premises and in each classroom.

It shall be the responsibility of Teachers and SNAs, as appropriate, to demonstrate correct hand-washing techniques and to model and re-inforce good hand hygiene practices.

Hand-washing technique should be in line with that recommended by the HSE, which is as follows:

Hand Washing 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.

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins will need to be carefully managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

Children must wash their hands:

- On their arrival at school each morning
- After using the toilet
- On their return to the classroom, where possible
- As soon as possible after their return to the classroom following break times, PE, SEN classes, etc.
- After activities that are likely to soil hands e.g. playing outside or certain sporting activities
- After blowing their noses or coughing/sneezing into a tissue
- After activities that involve the sharing of materials
- Before eating or drinking, where possible

Children from 2nd to 6th Classes should use hand sanitizer:

- On their return to the classroom
- Before entering the toilet
- Before engaging in activities that involve the sharing of materials
- Before eating or drinking

Children from Infant Classes should not have independent use of hand sanitiser. When necessary, the Class Teacher should apply the hand sanitiser and supervise its application.

Care should be taken to ensure that pupils do not ingest hand sanitiser as it is toxic.

Children must not bring hand sanitiser to school.

Staff members, pupils and parents should be aware that hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

Care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risks of falls.

It shall be the responsibility of Class Teachers to ensure that hand washing facilities within classrooms during the school day are be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and paper hand towels are topped up regularly.

d. Respiratory Hygiene and Etiquette

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good respiratory hygiene practices. Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of good respiratory etiquette in preventing the spread of COVID-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

Respiratory (Coughing and Sneezing) Etiquette will be in line with HSE Guidelines. When about to cough or sneeze:

1. Turn your head away from others

2. Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth
3. Dispose of your tissue in a rubbish bin
4. If you have no tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve at the crook of your elbow.
5. Wash or sanitise your hands

e. Face Masks and Visors

The school has invested in a substantial amount of PPE, under the DES PPE Procurement Process. This includes:

- Disposable Face Masks (Type IIR Surgical Face Masks) Masks will be supplied to each staff member on a weekly basis
- Disposable Face Masks (KN95 Masks) Masks will be supplied to SEN Team members, SNAs, High Risk staff and Pregnant staff.

Additional PPE will be supplied to staff members by the school office on request.

As per DES requirements, school staff are required to wear face masks indoors at all times and outdoors in situations where a physical distance of at least 2 metres from pupils and from each other cannot be maintained.

The wearing of face masks is not a requirement for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

- Has trouble breathing
- Is unconscious or incapacitated
- Is unable to remove it without help
- Has special needs who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering

All visitors to the school must wear face masks. If a visitor does not have a face mask, one will be provided. If a visitor cannot wear a face mask due to reasons stated above, a visor will be provided.

The school's guidelines for staff and visitors as to the proper use of face coverings is in line with HSE guidelines, which are as follows:

When you wear one, you should still do the important things necessary to prevent the spread of the virus. These include:

- Washing your hands properly and often
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Not touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Physical distancing (keeping at least 2 metres away from other people)

A face mask must cover the nose and mouth.

Wearing a face mask in public reduces the spread of COVID-19 in the community. It may help to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets from people infected with COVID-19.

Face masks help to stop people who are not aware they have the virus from spreading it.

If you have COVID-19 or have symptoms of the virus, you must self-isolate. Do this even if you wear a face covering.

How to use a Face Mask properly

Do:

- Clean your hands properly before you put it on
- Practise using it so you are comfortable putting it on and taking it off
- Cover your mouth and nose with it and make sure there are no gaps between your cloth face covering
- Tie it securely
- Carry unused masks in a sealable clean waterproof bag (for example, a ziplock bag)
- Dispose of used masks hygienically in the general waste bin.

Don't:

- Touch a mask or face covering while wearing it – if you do, clean your hands properly
- Use a damp or wet medical mask or reuse a medical mask
- share masks
- Lower your mask to speak, eat or drink– if you need to uncover your nose or mouth, take the mask off and put it in the bag for used masks
- Discard masks carelessly

Taking off a Face Mask:

- Remove it from behind – do not touch the front of the mask
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean your hands properly
- Dispose of used masks hygienically in the general waste bin.

f. Wearing of Gloves

In general, in the context of COVID-19, the use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

Gloves may be worn by staff and pupils for the purposes of cleaning, to help mitigate the irritant effects of cleaning products on their hands.

Used gloves should be carefully disposed of in a rubbish bin.

As usual, gloves may be worn by SNAs for the purposes of engaging with children who require intimate care and/or assistance with feeding.

g. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing in the school will be applied in a practical way to prioritise the health and safety of pupils and staff while at the same time attempting to avoid an obsessive and counterproductive focus on this issue.

Physical distancing will look different across the various classes, age groups and stages of learning in the school.

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 will not always be possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and that 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 1 metre distance and, where possible, 2 metres from pupils. 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

1. Increasing Separation

1. DECOMMISSIONING, RE-FITTING AND REPURPOSING OF SPACES WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Certain areas within the main school building have been decommissioned as teaching/learning areas, while others have been re-purposed.

2. DECLUTTERING AND RE-FITTING OF CLASSROOMS

Any unnecessary cabinets, furniture etc. have been removed to maximise the space in the classroom.

Compact storage has been installed in each mainstream classroom to maximise the amount of space available for physical distancing within the classroom.

Desks and chairs in classrooms have been reconfigured to maximise physical distancing according to DES Illustrative Layouts, based on an adaption of a layout recommended in the case of 30 students in a standard classroom of 80 sq. metres.

3. ALLOCATION OF CLASSROOMS

Allocation of classrooms to classes has been done taking account of the following factors:

In general, larger classes in terms of numbers have been allocated larger classrooms

Where possible, classes from 3rd Class upward have been allocated to the largest classrooms, with due regard to numbers in each class and children with additional needs.

4. CLASS BUBBLES, PODS AND GROUPS

Each individual class and classroom is to be treated as a Class Bubble in order to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between persons in different Class Bubbles.

As classes from Junior Infants to 2nd Class are not required to maintain physical distance, children in Junior Infants, Senior Infants and 1st Class will not be formed into Pods, but rather Groups.

The formation of Groups in these classes will help to minimise the sharing of toys/materials/resources between all children in the class. Each particular Group will be assigned toys/materials/resources for use by children of that Group alone.

Children in classes from Junior Infants to 1st Class will not be required to maintain physical distance from each other in the classroom or in the yard at breaktimes.

Pods have been created within Class Bubbles from 2nd Class to 6th Class as an additional measure, by the Sending Teacher, in consultation with the Class Teacher for the 2021/22 school year.

In creating Pods, priority will be given to friendships, due to the need to keep pods together for a protracted period and largely separate from the rest of the Class Bubble.

Gender balance, while desirable in any group setting, will not be a priority, due to the need to keep numbers in each Pod as small as possible.

It will be desirable to have Pods that consist of even numbers of children, insofar as far as possible, e.g.

- In classes of 30 children, pods will be 6,6,6,6,6
- In classes of 29 children, pods will be 6,6,6,6,5
- In classes of 28 children, pods will be 8,8,6,6
- In classes of 27 children pods will be 9,6,6,6
- In classes of 26 children pods will be 8,6,6,6
- In classes of 25 children pods will be 7,6,6,6
- In classes of 24 children pods will be 6,6,6,6

This is to keep Pod numbers as small as possible while conserving furniture and available space.

All reasonable efforts will be made to maintain a minimum distance of 1 metre between Pods within the Class Bubble, and wherever possible, between individuals within the Pod.

As per HSE Advice, received 30th August 2021, Class Pods will no longer be required to maintain physical distance from each other in the yard at breaktimes.

5. THE STAFFROOM

A maximum number of 6 persons in the Staffroom at any one time shall apply.

2. Limiting Interaction

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 Bubbles remain apart from each other 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 measures, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

1. SHARING OF MATERIALS/RESOURCES

Sharing educational material between Pods will be avoided/minimised, where possible.

Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource.

Materials and resources may be shared by children within a Class Pod. Children must sanitise their hands before and after use of shared materials and resources.

In-class teaching initiatives such as Literacy Lift Off and Ready Set Go Maths need to be carefully managed to minimise sharing of materials and resources.

Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.

Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

iPads and Chromebooks will be timetabled in such a way that Class Bubbles can avail of them for the entire school day rather than a portion of the day. The devices must be sanitised before passing them on to the next Class Bubble.

Each Group in Infant Classes will be assigned toys/resources for Aistear and Structured Play from Monday to Thursday. These toys/resources should only be used by children in that particular Group and not shared with other Groups. The toys/resources will be collected by the Class Teacher on Thursday evening, cleaned/sanitised as appropriate and set aside until Monday morning, a period of more than 72 hours. They can then be assigned to a different Group.

2. STAGGERED BREAKTIMES

Additional yard space has been created by dividing the elevated green area to the rear of the school premises (the pitch) into 4 separate areas.

This measure, in addition to the 3 existing tarmac-surfaced yards, amounts to 8 separate yard spaces.

For the purposes of managing breaktimes effectively, the school has been divided into 2 Sections:

- A Junior Section, comprising children in classes from Junior Infants to 2nd Class, 8 Class Bubbles in total
- A Senior Section, comprising children from 3rd Class to 6th Class, 8 Class Bubbles in total

These 2 Sections will have separate break times.

Class Bubbles within these Sections will have different, separate Yard Areas.

Class Teachers will bring their classes to the yard at the start of break and collect them from the yard afterwards. Teachers will need to pre-empt the bell in this regard, i.e. to be in the yard to collect their classes when the bell signalling the end of break actually rings.

The System for Staggered Breaktimes and the Yard Areas, to which the various Class Bubbles have been assigned, is attached as Appendix 6

3. SUPERVISION OF PUPILS

A Supervision System has been devised to allow for effective supervision of children at breaktime.

Class Teachers and SEN Teachers attached to the classes in each Section will supervise at breaktimes, as follows:

Junior Section: Class Teachers and 3 SEN Teachers, 10 Teachers in total

Senior Section: Class Teachers and 4 SEN Teachers, 12 Teachers in Total

From 8:40 a.m. to 8:50 a.m., the Morning Duty Team and the Principal (4 Teachers in total) will work on scheduled weeks to supervise the arrival of pupils at school.

On dry mornings, the Principal and 3 Morning Duty Team Members will supervise the front and rear of the school premises to ensure that children assemble in their allocated areas in an orderly fashion. Class Teachers will collect their classes from the yard at 8:50 a.m.

On wet mornings, children will be admitted directly to their classrooms and supervised by the Morning Duty Team.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will supervise the departure of children from school from 2:30 p.m. to 2:35 p.m. each evening.

4. ARRIVAL AT AND DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL

All practical efforts will be made to avoid interaction between pupils on arrival at and departure from the school premises.

Class Bubbles will be received at different times each morning and released at different times each evening, as follows:

Effective from 1st November 2021

Children in Infant Classes will be received and released as follows:

Junior Infants

Reception: 8:50 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Release: 1:30 p.m. to 1:40 p.m.

Senior Infants

Reception: 8:40 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.

Release: 1:20 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Children from 1st to 6th Classes will be received and released as follows:

Reception: 8:40 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.

Release:

Classes in Rooms 5,6,14,19

Release: 2:30 p.m.

Classes in Rooms 7,8,9,17

Release 2:31 p.m.

Children in Rooms 11, 12, 15,16 (the new prefabs on the ground floor)

Release: 2:32 p.m.

RECEPTION OF PUPILS FROM 1ST TO 6TH CLASSES FROM 1ST NOVEMBER 2021

The Principal and 2 other teachers will supervise pupils each morning from 8:40 a.m. to 8:50 a.m..

Pupils will not be accepted onto school grounds before 8:40 a.m.

Pupils will assemble as follows:

Classes in Rooms 5,6,14 assemble in Rear Yard

Classes in Rooms, 7,8,9,11,12,15,16,17,19 Assemble in Front Yard

Pupils admitted to classrooms at 8:50 a.m.

Teachers to be available from 8:50 a.m. sharp to collect classes.

Pupils to be seated in classes and ready for instruction by 9:00 a.m.

3. Physical Distancing outside of the Classroom and within the School

1. STAFF AND THE STAFFROOM

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 staff room and arriving to work.

Staff members must wear a face mask while inside buildings on school premises, apart from while eating in the Staffroom.

The maximum capacity of the Staffroom remains at 6 persons at any one time.

A physical distance of 2 metres should be observed between staff members within the Staffroom.

Tea and Coffee making facilities, i.e. boiler, teabags, coffee and milk will be available to staff, although staff are encouraged and advised to bring their own.

Disposable wooden stirrers will be available, spoons or other cutlery will not.

Plates, bowls, glasses etc. will not be available to staff.

Microwave, cooker, toaster will not be available to staff.

Staff must provide their own re-usable thermos tea/coffee mugs.

Whole Staff Meetings will be held remotely via Zoom.

Small Groups Staff Meetings will be held in large spaces, with a maximum attendance of 8 persons observing the requisite 2 metres of physical distance from each other.

A strictly NO HAND-SHAKING policy shall apply on the school premises.

All Staff members, apart from the Principal, Deputy Principal, LWR, ALWR, Health and Safety Representative, Secretaries and Caretaker are requested to classrooms by 3:30 p.m. each day.

2. PUPILS

Pupils must:

- (in the case of pupils in classes from 1st Class to 6th Class) go directly to their classrooms at 8:50 a.m. and sit down.
- adhere to their assigned door for entry into and exit from the main school building
- walk on the right hand side of the corridor in single file
- go directly about their business
- (in the case of children in classes from 2nd Class to 6th Class) as much as possible stay within their own Pod, maintaining a physical distance of 1 metre from other members of their Pod
- stay within their own classrooms and Class Bubbles
- disperse quickly after being released from school each evening

Pupils must not:

- move between Pods or mingle with pupils in other Pods inside the school buildings
- mingle with pupils in other Class Bubbles outdoors
- move between classrooms or mingle with pupils in other Class Bubbles indoors
- loiter on the corridor, in the doorways, in the foyer, in toilet areas or outside the school gates
- be sent on messages to the School Office, the Principal's Office or to other classrooms

3. PARENTS

Access to the school premises will be strictly by appointment only.

Access time will be limited to 15 minutes, between 2:45 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Parents coming on to the school premises must:

- complete the Contact Tracing Record Sheet

4. VISITORS

Arrangements have been made for postal and courier deliveries to be made to avoid those persons entering the school buildings.

Of necessity, DES Inspectors, technicians and repair personnel will need to access the school premises at short notice, during school hours.

Of necessity suppliers of sanitary services may access the school during school hours

Suppliers of floor mats will collect and deliver from the front door of the main school building and will not enter.

Visitors to the school must:

- complete the Contact Tracing Record Sheet

7.	ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES
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a. Sign In/Sign Out Sheet for Staff Members and Visitors

A Sign In/Sign Out Sheet will be maintained at Reception.

All Staff Members must sign each morning on arrival at the school premises and sign out before departure from the school premises each evening.

All Visitors to the school must sign in and sign out on the same sheet.

b. Contact Tracing Record Sheet

A Contact Tracing Record Sheet will be maintained at Reception.

All Visitors to the school must complete and sign the Contact tracing Record Sheet.

The Contact Tracing Records will be maintained for a period of 2 weeks and then disposed of by shredding. Records will be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts.

c. Cleaning

The Board of Management has engaged a Contract Cleaning Company, The Sanitising Company, to perform:

An initial deep-clean of the school premises before the start of the school year.

A daily regime of enhanced cleaning to the standard required of a school operating in a climate of COVID-19.

The school will be cleaned each day between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Additional cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces; flat surfaces, table tops, window sills, door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Cleaning products must be kept out of the reach of younger children. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area after use each day.

There should be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Fridge and kettles will be available for staff use. The microwave oven and toaster will be available.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils. All staff members will be required to have a re-usable lidded thermos coffee/tea mug which they must take home at the end of each school day. A supply of disposable tea/coffee cups will be available in the Staffroom.

Staff should bring a packed lunch with them to school each day.

Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a Pupil/Staff Member with suspected COVID-19 was Present

The room will 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.

The environment and furniture should be cleaned using cleaning cloths, mop-heads and a household detergent followed by disinfection with bleach.

Special attention should be paid to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, flat surfaces, table tops, window sills, door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests 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 like a canteen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant.

d. Access to the School by Visiting Teachers, Groups, Coaches, etc.

It will not be possible for the school to accommodate visiting teachers within the school buildings for the foreseeable future.

Sports coaches will be accommodated from 1st November 2021, providing that their engagement with classes can take place outdoors.

It will not be possible to make the school premises available to groups for extra-curricular activities outside of school hours.

e. First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Scoil Mhuire.

In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999.

Contact the principal or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

f. Fire Drills

The Fire Drill procedure has been updated in light of the changed conditions in the school due to COVID-19.

An additional Assembly Area to the rear of the school premises (ASSEMBLY AREA 2) has been added to the existing Assembly Area to the front of the school (ASSEMBLY AREA 1)

Classes in the Main School Building will use the doors assigned to them (where possible) to access the Assembly Areas.

8.	Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19
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Neither staff members nor pupils should attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.

The school has a designated Covid-19 Isolation Room:

- CIR

The Isolation Route (IR) shall be directly from the classroom to the nearest exit and to the CIR via an outdoor route. If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- In the case of a child, the Class Teacher will instruct the child to leave the classroom and wait outside the classroom door.
- The Class Teacher will leave the classroom, instruct the child to put on a face mask and call the School Office to inform the Principal that a child is being sent to CIR
- The School Office will contact the parents/guardians of the child immediately
- The School Office will call the SEN Teacher attached to the class in question and ask her to supervise the class in the Class Teacher's absence
- The Class Teacher accompany the individual to the CIR via the IR, 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
- In the case of a staff member, he/she if possible will make his/her way to the CIR via the IR, accompanied by the Principal or WR
- An assessment will be made 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 in remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and in 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.
- If the person is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and will advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect;
- The school 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 CIR and work areas involved (see Appendix)
- The waste bag containing any potentially contaminated waste will be double-bagged and disposed of with the general waste.

9.	People at High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)
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Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk. The HSE has set out these groups, which include people who:

- are over 70 years of age
- 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
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes them 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.

Arrangements for staff who are in the High Risk and Very High Risk groups are outlined in DES Circular 0042/2021.

10.	Covid 19 Related Absence Management
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The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

Details of the leave arrangements that will apply are contained in Department of Education and Skills Circular 0042/2021

11.	Staff Duties
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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:

- Familiarise themselves with the COVID-19 Response Plan and Risk Assessment
- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Complete the DES Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school
- Complete the RTW Declaration
- 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.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- Demonstrate and teach good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices and handwashing technique to children
- 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.

Additional Staff Duties

Teachers are required to:

- Remind children to wash/sanitise their hands
 - on returning to the classroom after breaktimes
 - before eating or drinking
 - before sharing materials/resources within a Pod or Group
- Maintain supplies of paper hand towel, soap and hand sanitiser in their classrooms and ensure that dispensers are refilled, when necessary
- Clean and sanitise their own desks and work stations and classroom sink areas regularly
- Sanitise the door handles of their classrooms regularly
- Keep their classrooms well ventilated by opening windows as much as possible
- On a rota-basis, assume responsibility for the cleaning of the Staffroom (wiping down

flat surfaces and handles with disinfectant at the end of the school day.)

- Inform the WR or Principal of any issues

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

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

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the Principal.

The DES 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.

13.	The Impact of Covid-19 on School Procedures and Activities
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Many schools activities and procedures will be affected by COVID-19. The school has had to adapt many of our normal procedures to respond to the situation.

Fire Drill

The school has adapted our Fire Drill procedures by introducing an additional Assembly Area.

Staggered Morning Drop Off and Evening Pick Up

This is covered in Section 6.2.4 above

Staggered Breaktimes

This is covered in Section 6.2.2 above

Choir Practice and Music Lessons

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and will be avoided for the foreseeable future.

Visiting music teachers such as will not attend the school for the foreseeable future.

After-School Activities

The use of the school premises by outside groups has been suspended for the foreseeable future. This will be reviewed in due course, in line with advice from NEPHET, the HSE, the DES, the CPSMA and Allianz, the school's insurers.

Sport

The school will not take part in competitive sporting competitions during the first term of the school year.

Swimming

The school will not be facilitating swimming lessons in Leisureland for the foreseeable future. The situation will be re-assessed after Christmas.

Wellbeing

There will be a strong focus on children's Mental Wellbeing, with the MindUp Programme continuing to be implemented and the scope for extra Brain Breaks throughout the school day. Teachers will be encouraged to take their pupils outside (weather permitting) for short wellness breaks extra to the usual scheduled breaktimes.

Literacy Lift Off and Ready Set Go Maths

Team teaching will proceed with caution under careful and safe management of materials and resources.

Aistear

Aistear will need to be carefully managed by Infant Teachers to ensure that, insofar as possible:

- toys and materials are shared only by members of the same Class Group
- children wash/sanitise their hands before and after Aistear
- toys are suitably cleaned and/or quarantined for 72 hours before being made available for use by another Class Group

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.

Toys that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary) are preferable. 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.

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.
- Some hard plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher.
- 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 1,000ppm available chlorine. The item should be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

Art

Where possible pupils should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Art equipment is to be shared only within Class Groups or Pods.

The Class Teacher is responsible for ensuring that children wash/sanitise their hands before and after sharing materials.

Electronics

Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use. iPads and Chromebooks will be assigned to Class Bubbles for the full school day and sanitised by the sending teacher.

Library Books

Where practical pupils should have their own books.

Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipe able plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses.

Library books will be quarantined for 72 hours on their return by pupils before being returned to the library shelf.

Pupils should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

Shared Sports Equipment

Equipment sharing will be kept to an absolute minimum.

Children must sanitise their hands before and after shared use of equipment.

Equipment must be cleaned after each use. This responsibility falls to the Class Teacher.

14.	Curricular Focus
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Principles

Care will be taken to avoid the over use of teacher-directed and didactic approaches to teaching and learning in an effort to ‘catch up’ or ‘cover lost ground.’

Teachers will take time to tune into where pupils are at in their learning and will consider how pupils’ learning needs can best be met in the new school year.

Priority Areas

Greater time and attention will be given to areas such as SPHE, Physical Education (PE), Language and Maths.

Language

There will be an increased focus on explicit language teaching across all curricular areas. Reading for pleasure and entertainment will be prioritised.

Project work will be emphasised as a means of developing pupils writing skills.

Moltar do mhúinteoirí deiseanna a thabhairt do pháistí Gaeilge labhartha a chloisteáil, trí mheáin na teicneolaíochta, mar shampla TG4 agus Cúla 4.

Beidh béim mhór ar chumarsáid agus ar Ghaeilge labhartha.

Maths

Pupils’ mathematics learning from their previous class will be reinforced and consolidated.

Topics not taught in the last school year will be prioritised.

Tables and mental computation will be prioritised.

RSE/Stay Safe

The Stay Safe Programme and Relationships and Sexuality Education will be revisited and priority areas covered in the first term of the school year.

PE

The responsibility for the cleaning and organisation of equipment after use falls to the Class Teacher.

Play

Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to play and socialise both through structured and unstructured breaks.

Integration

Integration will be used to support the consolidation and application of knowledge and skills across curricular areas in a way that also gives pupils a more coherent learning experience.

Planned thematic approaches, particularly in Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) and between SESE and other curricular areas will be used to practise literacy and numeracy skills

Wellbeing

There should therefore be a focus on wellbeing as a foundation for learning. The MindUp programme will continue to be implemented and extra Brain Breaks and Wellness Breaks will be included in the school day.

15.	Contingency Plan in the Event of a Localised School Closure
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Board of Management WILL NOT make a unilateral decision to close a Class Bubble or the school on the basis of suspected or actual cases of COVID-19. If A Class Bubble or the school is to close, it will ONLY be on the instructions of the HSE and the Department of Education and Skills. Should this be the case, the school will contact relevant Parents/Guardians via. email and text message to inform them of the situation.

The school will be guided by the Department's updated Continuity of Schooling Guidance documents in the event of localised school closure. In the event of a closure, teaching and learning will be done remotely via SeeSaw and/or Google Classroom..

In circumstances where there is clear public health advice from HSE Public Health that the school should close, the school will endeavour to:

- make best use of guidance materials which were already provided to all schools during the period of school closures
- alert parents/guardians to where pupils are at in their learning
- develop lesson activities to be carried out at home
- make best use of digital technologies to allow continued engagement with pupils and their learning through the use of SeeSaw and/or Google Classrooms
- contact parents regularly to offer support and feedback

SEN pupils will be supported through phone/video calls from their SEN Teacher and/or SNA, as appropriate

Staff meetings will be conducted remotely via Zoom

16.	Additional Advice for Parents/Guardians
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Do not send your child to school or childcare if any of the following is true:

Your child has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- any other [common symptoms of COVID-19](#) - a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
- been in [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- been living with someone who is unwell and may have COVID-19
- an existing breathing condition that has recently got worse

Persons who have been referred for a COVID-19 test must not present at school.

Persons in the same household as a person who has been referred for a COVID-19 test must restrict their movements pending the outcome of the test and must not present at school.

The school must take direction from the HSE as to whether to shut down pods or classes within the school. The school cannot do so unilaterally. The school will only direct pupils to stay at home if instructed to do so by the HSE.

You should and must act on the direction and advice of the HSE regarding whether to absent your child from school. If in any doubt, contact the HSE or your GP and be guided by their advice.

If you are a close contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, you may expect to be contacted by the HSE, who will advise you what you should do in terms of restricting your movements, presenting for a test and sending your children to school.

If you believe yourself or a member of your household to be a close contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, an immediate call for advice to your GP or the HSE is strongly advisable.

While the school welcomes contact regarding concerns about COVID-19, we cannot act on the basis of rumour and conjecture. Neither can we discuss confidential information pertaining to members of the school community who have been referred for COVID-19 tests or who may have tested positive for COVID-19. Again, we will take our direction from the HSE as to what action to take in such cases.

We really appreciate those parents who let us know that they or their children have been advised to restrict their movements, have been advised to self-isolate, have been referred for COVID-19 tests or, God forbid, who have tested positive for COVID-19. This information will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Water fountains have been decommissioned for the time being. Children will need to bring plenty of drink to school with them to see them through the school day.

Children will need to bring their lunches to school in a lunchbox. All leftovers and empties, i.e. yoghurt cartons, juice containers must be brought home.

Children should be able to open and close bottles and lunchboxes independently.

Children will need to have 2 pencil cases, one to be kept at school and one to be kept at home, to avoid transference from home to school and vice-versa.

Children will need to have an adequate supply of pens, pencils, erasers, toppers, colours, etc. as sharing or borrowing these items will not be possible.

Children who cannot tie their own shoelaces must wear shoes/runners with Velcro straps.

Children's jackets/coats should be easy to put on and take off.

Children in Junior Infant and Senior Infant classes must bring a change of clothes in a plastic bag to school with them in their schoolbags each day.

Children should bring a supply of tissues to school with them in their pockets/schoolbags.

Children do not need to bring hand-sanitiser to school with them.

Parents should make their child(ren)'s Class Teacher(s) aware of any issues regarding use of hand sanitiser, e.g. eczema. Such children will be facilitated in washing their hands rather than using hand sanitiser.

No unnecessary books, toys or other belongings should be brought to school by children.

Children's books, pencil cases, bottles, lunchboxes, coats/jackets, wellies and other belongings should be clearly labelled. Sharing of any of these items will not be allowed.

While children under the age of 13 are not expected to wear face masks, your child will be allowed to wear one if you so wish. If this is the case, it is your responsibility as a parent/guardian to ensure that he/she/they know how to put on and take off the face mask properly, as the school can accept no responsibility in this regard.

Children are not expected to wear gloves and are asked to refrain from doing so.

Parents are expected to teach their children the following before they return to school:

- Proper respiratory etiquette, i.e. coughing, sneezing, use of a tissue to blow noses and hygienic disposal thereof after use
- Proper handwashing technique
- The importance of not touching faces, picking noses, sucking thumbs, etc.

These will be reinforced in school by your child's Class Teacher

List of Appendices	
1.	Covid-19 Policy Statement
2.	Covid-19 Risk Assessment