



Covid-19 Response Plan

Introduction

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown.

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 (NPHE).

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

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

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

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

This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
 - a. School Building
 - b. Signage
3. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)
5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
 - a. Wash your Hands Frequently
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 - d. Physical Distancing
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8. Control Measures
 - a. Return to Work Form

- b. Induction Training
 - c. Induction Training – On-line Video
 - d. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
 - e. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - f. Wearing of Gloves
 - g. Cleaning
 - h. Access to the School Building / Contact Log
 - i. First Aid / Emergency Procedure
9. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
 10. Staff Duties
 11. Covid related absence management
 12. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme
 13. Impact of Covid-19 on certain school activities
 14. Special Educational Needs

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 and www.education.ie.

1. Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown 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 and updated 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 Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing

- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

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

Lead Worker Representatives: *Elaine Light & Martina Swinburne*

Signed: *Aidan Mc Loughlin* (Principal)

Date: 25th August 2021

2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

Details for the reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

Signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene will be displayed throughout the school. The following is a link to the dedicated area of the Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC) website where there are a number of posters, including those appropriate for primary school pupils, located. Irish versions are also available here

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

3. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (School) [RTW(s)] form, which is available electronically, in the staff room or from Martina Swinburne.

A RTW form should only be completed at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

The LWR will provide details of the **Covid-19 Induction Training** for completion by new staff and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school, or updated Covid-19 training, to facilitate the staff's return to the school facility. The aim of such training is to ensure that the staff has full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
- Covid-19 symptoms
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the COVID-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal, who is supported in this role by the BOM.

4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and the School Leadership.

The Return to Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

The role of the worker representative) is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

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

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

Names of Lead Worker Representatives:	Contact Details:
Elaine Light	mrslight@bellewstownns.com
Martina Swinburne	msswinburne@bellewstownns.com

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.

5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. In line with the requirements of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (section 19) it is the policy of the BOM in Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown to address significant hazards and risks in the workplace, to assess the risks to safety, health and welfare and to control these risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

The Board is committed to the ongoing identification of hazards, the assessment of the appropriate risks and the introduction of controls to deal with them. In addition, staff are involved and participate in safety, health and welfare issues within the school and are encouraged to identify and report any potential hazards that may exist and to ensure that a risk assessment is carried out.

This revised Risk Assessment includes all relevant updates and necessary control measures to minimise the risk of staff and others being exposed to Covid-19 and these will be incorporated into the Safety Statement for Scoil Naomh Treasa, in line with requirements of section 20 of the 2005 Act.

It is envisaged that additional reviews will be undertaken on a regular basis and in line with Government and public health advice to ensure that all information remains accurate, that controls are appropriate and where necessary risks are reassessed.

6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of Coronavirus (which includes the DELTA and OMICRON variants and any other potential future variants).

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

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu. If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test. Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website. Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised. If you do not have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a COVID-19 walk-in test centre.

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

This can be achieved through the following measures:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.

- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID19 to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.

Staff, pupils and visitors should at all times adhere to the up-to-date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

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

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

7. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

a. Wash your Hands Frequently

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing. For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

b. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of hand sanitiser (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities.

They will be available at entry and exit points and in each classroom.

c. Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth

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

d. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace.

e. Practice Respiratory Hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

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

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

f. Do

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

g. Do Not

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

h. People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)

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 - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immune-suppression 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 you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immune-suppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return-to-Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills.

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

8. Control Measures

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

These control measures are outlined in this document.

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

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

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

The following control measures have been put in place:

a. Return to Work Form

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

b. Induction Training

All new staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The LWR will provide details of the **Covid-19 Induction Training** for completion by new staff. The aim of such training is to ensure that the staff has full knowledge and understanding of the following:

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- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
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- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the Covid-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal.

c. Induction Training for Return to School

The LWR will provide all staff members, current and new, with details of any additional health and safety measures required to be put in place in the school. The LWR will also forward details and links to updated online Departmental Covid-19 training, to facilitate the staff's and students' safe return to the school facility.

d. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

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

Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility and should be available in each classroom.

e. Physical distancing

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

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

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

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

Increasing Separation

The guidance documents provided by the Department of Education on optimal school layout should be used by schools to increase separation to the greatest degree possible.

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, primary schools should:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing.
2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing.

The teacher's desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.

Decreasing Interaction

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in a primary or special school will depend on the school setting and a common-sense approach is required recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between pupils. In primary schools a distance of 1m should be maintained between desks or between individual pupils. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore achieving this recommendation in the first four years of primary is not a pre-requisite to reopening a primary for all pupils.

Where possible work stations should be allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces which are shared.

The risk of infection may be reduced by structuring pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical. If the class is divided into Pods, there should be at least (1m distance) between individual Pods within the Class Bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible.

Generally speaking the objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible.

The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

Pod sizes should be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context. To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times.

Different Class Bubbles should where possible have separate areas at break or meal times.

Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided / minimised where possible. Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible.

Additional measures to decrease interaction include:

- Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) should be discouraged
- 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.
- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items
- Encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth).
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

Staggered drop off/collection times are in place. Students are to proceed directly to their classrooms in the morning time. Parents are encouraged to drop and go and are not permitted to enter the school yard.

Staff

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much distance as is possible, as well as updated guidance on face covering, should be observed. Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through. Staff meetings should be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Implement no hand shaking policy.

Corridors

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

Yard/Supervision

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary or special schools play together outdoors, but in so far as practical it is helpful to keep to consistent groups. Children should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities. Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

Ventilation

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools'. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows 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 each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. The Department has also published guidance regarding on how these practical steps measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) monitors.

f. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education has recommended that face coverings should 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. The Department has accepted this recommendation. Accordingly, 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
- Parent Teacher meetings (when required – as a general rule these meetings are held over the phone while Covid-19 remains a risk to health)

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

Face Coverings/Masks

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

As of December 2021 children from third to sixth class are required to wear a face covering to school, unless under special circumstances. It is not recommended that children from Infants to Second Class wear face-coverings.

It is 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.

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

- Primary school children from Infants to Second Class (Updated DES guidelines December 2021)
- Any person with a difficulty breathing on doctor's recommendation
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

All staff wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

Information should be provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6ZqdpLfSqw>

Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.

Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

The school is providing medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and teachers in the school.

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

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

g. Wearing of Gloves/Aprons

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate but may be necessary for cleaning, intimate care settings and when administering first aid. 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.

Aprons

Aprons may also be appropriate in certain circumstances including for intimate care needs or for staff assigned to cleaning an area where a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 was present.

h. Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular - toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

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

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

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

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

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

The room should be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.

Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.

Person assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.

Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine-based product (household bleach).

Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.

Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

If a pupil or staff 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 (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible

i. Access to the school building /contact log

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

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

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and students contacts.

j. First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown.

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

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

9. Impact of Covid 19 on certain school activities

Choir/Music Performance

Choir practices/performance and music practices/performance involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

Sport Activities

Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

Shared Equipment

Toys

All toys should be cleaned on a regular basis for example weekly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs. Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.

When purchasing toys choose ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary).

If cloth or soft toys are used they should be machine washable.

Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils to those with special educational needs may be inclined to put into their mouths should be capable of being washed and disinfected.

All play equipment should be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned they should be discarded.

Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed. At this time soft modelling materials and play dough where used should be for individual use only.

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.

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

Musical Equipment/Instruments – To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

Library Policy – Where practical pupils should have their own books. Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Pupils should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

Shared Sports Equipment – As much is possible, minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

10. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following outlines how Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown, will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases has been put in place. The designated isolation area in Scoil Naomh Treasa is a sectioned off area, in the front entrance hallway.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Scoil Naomh Treasa, Bellewstown, 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 and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times
- The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the 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
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- 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
- 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

- If the person is well enough to go home, 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
- 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 should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times. School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes.

11. Special Educational Needs

Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs

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

Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

Hand hygiene

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

Equipment

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

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

- Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean;
- Care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Cleaning is generally achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water.
- Equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child e.g. toileting aids;
- If equipment is soiled with body fluids:
 - First clean thoroughly with detergent and water;

- Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant;
- Rinse with water and dry.

12. Staff Duties

All staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances
- Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - ☐ if they are identified 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
- 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
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

13. Covid Related Absence Management

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

14. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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

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

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