

# ***Catherine Mc Auley N.S.***

***59 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2.***

***Roll No: 19705T***

***Principal: Neasa Sheahan***

**Tel: 01-6615645**

**[email: info@catherinemcauleyns.ie](mailto:info@catherinemcauleyns.ie)**

## **Catherine McAuley National School COVID-19 Policy**

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

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct 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 from staff is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Covid 19 Response Plan

This document aims to provide details of:

1. Introduction: overview of the particulars of Catherine McAuley NS, including an overview of our school day.
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)
4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
5. General advice to help prevent the spread of the virus
6. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
7. Control Measures
8. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
9. Staff Duties
10. Covid related absence management
11. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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](http://www.Gov.ie), [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie), [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie); [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie);

## Introduction

The Board of Management acknowledges the current difficulties involved in the opening of the school – and our continuing efforts to remain open - and we wish to outline in this document, and reassure the school community that every effort is being made to make this process as safe as possible.

The reopening of Catherine McAuley NS is underpinned by the following considerations:

- Safety, health, wellbeing and gradual re-adjustment to the school environment will be the main focus.
- The flow of our school day will be adjusted to incorporate new risk management measures - this may have an impact on direct teaching time initially, as we adjust to our new routines.
- Measures will be controlled and restrictive in the beginning but the wish is that procedures introduced will lead to a safer environment for everyone, and will be over time when it is safe to do so.
- These measures will only be as strong as the weakest adherence to them. Parents, children and staff are all in a large community together and the safety of each individual will very much depend on the actions of each member of this community.
- Measures that are introduced will involve behavioural change, and the Board will endeavour to support all members of our school community with these changes.

This Covid 19 Response Plan has been developed in line with public health advice issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and in compliance with the “Return to Work Safely Protocols” developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).

It is the intention of The Board of Management of Catherine McAuley National School, in accordance with all relevant guidelines, to identify the steps that will be taken to minimise the risk of the introduction of COVID-19 into Catherine McAuley NS. **It is, however, recognized that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time.**

Our school is a place of work, as well as being a place of learning. The purpose of this document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the prevention, early detection, and control of COVID-19 in school.

This document provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, pupils, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of education for the health and wellbeing of pupils and society as a whole.

### **School profile**

99 pupils (44 new pupils)

11 mainstream class teachers

1 administrative principal

4 SNAs

1 Caretaker

1 Secretary

1 cleaning company (now 7 hours per day and a commitment that, as far as is possible, the same staff will clean the school every day)

17 bus drivers (employed through Bus Eireann – school bus scheme)

### **Limitations of our building**

There is one door access point to the building: where all pupils, staff, visitors, deliveries etc. come through. This currently has two separate touch points – they keypad and door handle.

There is no on-site parking for parents/guardians and very limited and cramped parking for staff. This parking blocks the gate at times.

There are no dedicated toilets for classrooms – there are two sets of boys and girls bathrooms for 99 pupils.

The staffroom/kitchen is relatively small.

All children travel to school by bus – transport provided as part of school transport scheme facilitated by Bus Eireann. The guidelines around safety on school transport is not at all reassuring at this time. As a school we have asked parents to provide two masks per day – to facilitate mask wearing on the bus – as this will be exposure outside of the class grouping/yard bubble. The Board of Management have expressed some concern regarding the lack of social distancing possible on the bus. It is their wish that parents be encouraged to express their views on this directly to local T.D.s and to Ministers Foley, Madigan and

Rabbitte. The school management team would also like to express great concern that children and staff are not considered close contacts in relation to a confirmed case if that child or adult is asymptomatic. This is an unacceptable level of risk. This is per the changes in the guidelines for schools as of 27/9/2021.

It is recognised that children will be anxious, parents will be anxious and staff will be too.

Because of the volatility of the national situation, the school will need to prepare for potential closure at any time at short notice.

The school will open for all pupils on Wednesday, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. The school day will be from 9.00am to 2.40 pm.

## **The School Day**

### **Arrival/Entry into the building**

At present social distancing is not facilitated on the buses. Parents will be asked to ensure their child wears a mask on the school bus and that their child keeps their mask on until they enter their own class room. This is due the fact children from various bubbles will be sharing school buses. Parental and pupil co-operation is essential here.

Children will clean their hands after removing their masks. Used masks should be stored in a sealable bag and a new one used for the bus journey home.

It will not be possible for parents/guardians to come into the school building at any time of the day.

Parents/guardians may wait in the yard for pupils they are collecting at the end of the day, but they must be vigilant to ensure they remain socially distanced from one another.

All staff will need to be in their classrooms at 8.55am. This will be essential to ensure safe entry of all children. Parents are asked to wait at a safe distance outside the school, preferably by parking safely and walking their child to the pavement outside. Social distancing will be essential at this point. **No parking**

**will be allowed close to the entry to the lane and this will be strictly enforced. This is to ensure that there is an open space to allow children to enter safely. There will be no parking at either side of the gate.**

The principal/SET teacher and/or SNAs will meet the children from the buses and direct them safely to the entrance of the school. Both staff and pupils will wear face masks/visors at this time and practice physical distancing where feasible and practical.

Children will start to be admitted from 8.55 am.

### **1. Planning and Preparing for a Return to School**

Before reopening schools for the 2021/22 school year, the management of Catherine McAuley NS have:

- planned to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates.
- planned to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required.
- ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education
- provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- identified a Lead Worker representative
- displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- identified and made changes to the school and classroom layout to support physical distancing where possible
- organised for the removal of unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school
- updated the health and safety risk assessment
- made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school
- provided links to published induction training

## **2. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative**

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the safe resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government. The specific publications taken into account have been: the Return to Work Safely Protocol

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/> alongside general HSE/HSA advice as well as the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/>

The caretaker has carefully maintained the school building during the Summer closure period of July and August. Scheduled bin collections happen on a weekly basis, and the school water supply is uninterrupted.

### **Signage**

Catherine Mc Auley NS display signage provided by the Department, and some sourced from registered contractors - in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

Appropriate signage has been distributed and displayed throughout the school building. This includes:

- age appropriate key health messages outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID- 19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Posters/visuals encouraging/reminding students about maintaining social distancing during transitions
- Directional arrows to assist flow throughout the building
- There has also been a child-centred set of videos showing explicit technique developed by a parent who is a nurse practitioner. These have been distributed to parents alongside this document.



We are adjusting our signage in response to the need expressed by staff on an ongoing basis.

### **Lead Worker Representative and Covid Response Committee**

As per the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools – a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) has been appointed: this is Aoife Kennedy. Should Aoife be absent, queries/concerns should be reported to Patti Roche. If Patti is absent, queries/concerns should be reported to Ciara McCauley. A school decision was made that instead of a nominated deputy LWR – a Covid-19 Response Committee has been formulated to support the LWR. The members of the Covid-19 response committee are: Patti Roche, Ciara McCauley and Evelyn Kinney.

The role of the Covid-19 Response Committee will be to:

- 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
- It is recommended that all employees and families download and regularly check in on the ‘Covid-19 Tracker App’
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory hygiene
- 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/committee member, who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

### **3. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**

All staff completed an initial risk assessment prior to the opening of the school on September 1<sup>st</sup>, this was reviewed by the BOM, and will be monitored on an ongoing basis as other risks are identified, and school procedures established. Staff reviewed this plan at the scheduled staff meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> of September. The Health and Safety Officer on the BOM (Dermot McCarthy) will complete a planned inspection/walk through of the school after the first Board meeting of the year has taken place to further review this risk assessment and at that point a safety statement will be completed.

### **First Aid/Emergency Procedure**

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in schools. Physical distancing may be very difficult to maintain at this time so masks/visors, gloves aprons have been purchased to ensure safety. These can be used by staff at any time.

First aid supplies have been redistributed so that there is a small supply in each room and each individual teacher/SNA is responsible for their own students/own bubble. This will limit possible cross contamination.

### **4. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**

Access to the school building will be limited to staff, pupils and bus drivers.

Visitors will be restricted to essential purposes only and will be limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal or deputy 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 will be maintained. Student absences will be recorded securely on the Aladdin schools platform. Staff absences will be recorded by on the OLCS system. Classes will be organised into bubbles that will have some limited contact with one another during break times and trips. This is a vital step in both ensuring that contacts within school are always limited – and known in the event that contact tracing is necessary.

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; pupil-pupil, teacher-teacher and teacher-pupil and must be managed in all settings for all.

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:

- All staff and students will now have a responsibility to behave in accordance with the national regulations while not in work. Any setting that is deemed to be unsafe carries a potential risk of infecting an entire school community.
- Staff and pupils that have symptoms must not attend school, must phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Staff and pupils must not attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and must follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- A child who has allergies, or a condition with symptoms that may be similar to Covid 19, will be advised to to have a doctor's note explaining these symptoms and advice on how to recognise the symptoms of Covid 19 should they arise. Parents are encouraged to make contact with school should their child display symptoms similar to COVID-19 - but arise from a different condition e.g. asthma or hayfever.
- Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school must bring this to the attention of a member of the LWR/Covid-19 response committee immediately.
- A protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in in place for students and staff – see

section 7 'Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19'.

- Everyone entering the school building will be encouraged to sanitise their hands using the sanitising station in the foyer, they will then be encouraged to sanitise before leaving.
- Visitors to the school during the day will be by prior arrangement and only if essential.
- Physical distancing (of 2m) will be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.
- Good respiratory hygiene will be taught to students clearly and explicitly. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze: then disposing of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin and washing/sanitising hands.
- Staff and pupils will understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands correctly. The school will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the school. Former Board member Breda Nolan has conducted a whole staff hand-washing workshop (in the last school year). Breda also produced student-friendly videos (featuring one of our past pupils) demonstrating correct technique for hand-washing and sanitising, these are shown regularly to students and have been shared with all of our current families.

Staff and parents will need to know the Symptoms of COVID-19. These include, but are not exclusive to:

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- fever (high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more)
- dry cough
- fatigue (tiredness)
- shortness of breath/breathing difficulties
- loss or changed sense of taste or smell
- blocked nose
- conjunctivitis (red or pink eye)
- sore throat
- headache
- muscle or joint pain (aches and pains)
- skin rash
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea
- chills or dizziness

Parents have been reminded that their child may not have all of these symptoms. Symptoms may vary for different age groups or variants of the virus. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show.

Parents are reminded of HSE advice that even if their child's symptoms are very mild, keep them at home for 48 hours and phone their GP for advice.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can be similar to symptoms of cold, flu or hay fever. If any parent or staff member is in doubt about any symptoms, they are urged to contact their GP.

- A clear guide to covid symptoms in children can be found [here](#)
- A clear guide to covid symptoms in adults can be found [here](#)

More detail on specifics of cleaning regimes and other control measures may be found in section 6 'Control Measures'.

## **5. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**

All staff had to complete a 'return to work' form which was provided and returned electronically via google form. This procedure will be followed after each significant school break throughout the year: mid term break (Hallowe'en), Christmas, Mid term break (February), and Easter.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, all staff completed the induction training for primary and special schools.

Parents will be asked to fill in a pre-return to school questionnaire on behalf of their child after each significant break during the school year (same as indicated for teachers above) – prior to a new half term/term. Staff and parent's co-operation with this request will be essential to ensure the safety of our entire school community. This information will be returned to the principal in the format of a google form which is stored securely and confidentially in line with GDPR. The sole basis for the gathering of this information is to ensure safety and minimise the risk of the spread of the virus.

## **6. Control Measures**

In addition to measures covered earlier in the document other control measures that will be used school-wide and modelled by staff throughout the school day will include:

## Physical Distancing

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing can be usefully applied allowing for some flexibility when needed, and must be applied in a practical way. This may differ from one classroom to another. The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in schools. To that end, every effort will be made to:

- Limit interactions between class pods and bubbles (See Appendix 1)

Each class has 10 pupils and a teacher; 8 classes have shared access to a SNA. The pupils and their teacher and SNA constitute a “Pod”. The pupils in a pod may interact with each other within a distance of 1 metre without face coverings. A “Bubble” is a grouping of 3 to 4 classes/pods which stays apart from other bubbles as much as possible (except on school buses). Bubbles may share resources e.g. PE equipment etc. and play together at yard times.

- Limit the sharing of common facilities.
- Where possible staff will maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m.
- All staff will wear visors and masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- HSE guidelines and signage will be used to encourage and remind staff and pupils to practice physical distancing when entering and leaving the school building and when moving around the building.
- Unnecessary clutter and furniture has been removed from classrooms to facilitate as much distancing as is possible.
- Perspex screens have been provided for all staff – with some perspex screens provided on student desks and in between student computer terminals also.

## **Doors and windows**

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimize hand contact with common surfaces. Doors will be opened before the children enter the building. Where feasible classroom doors and windows will be open during the day to ensure that classrooms are well ventilated.

## **Toilets**

There are no dedicated toilets for classrooms – there are two sets of boys and girls bathrooms for 99 pupils. A set of girls and boys bathrooms across the bridge on the third floor, used by children from Rooms 7, 8 9 and 10. A boys bathroom on the first floor and a girls bathroom on the ground floor, used by children from Rooms 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. Children on yard use the toilets on the first and second floors. Children will be reminded to observe physical distancing in the bathroom, two students in the bathroom at any one time. Children will wash their hands correctly after using the bathroom and hand washing posters will be displayed above the sinks.

## **Hands-free sanitising units**

Additional hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed in/outside each classroom. These are additional to the free-standing unit at the entrance/exit door. There is also a sanitising unit in the school hall that is shared with Scoil Chaitríona (we have use of the hall every Tuesday and Wednesday). Parents are asked not to send in hand sanitiser – as this will be provided in each classroom – with sensor operated hand sanitiser units in/outside each classroom.

## **CO2 monitors**

In addition to the CO2 monitors received in late September – the Board has funded extra monitors so that there is one in each classroom. Teachers monitor the level indicated carefully, and should the monitor indicate an orange or red reading: the teacher will take all students outside for an ‘air break’.

## **Hand Hygiene**

The children will be reminded to wash their hands:

- 1 When children remove their mask after their bus journey

2 Before eating at little break

3 After little break

4 Before eating at big break

5 After eating at big break

7 After using the toilet.

8 When hands are dirty

The children will also be reminded to sanitise their hands throughout the day – especially before and after handling learning materials (maths manipulatables for example) and before putting their mask on prior to getting on the school bus in the afternoon.

## **Breaktimes**

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. However break/yards times will be staggered. There will be 2 “little” and 2 “big” breaks in September.

Small breaks:

First will be from 10.45 to 10:55, (Bubble 1; Rooms, 1, 4,6,8 and 10)

Second from 11:00 to 11:10 ( Bubble 2 Rooms 2,3,5,7 and9)

Big breaks:

First will be from 12:15 to 12:45, (Bubble 1; Rooms, 1,4,6,8,and 10)

Second from 12:50 to 1:20, (Bubble 2; Rooms, 2, 3,5,7 and 9)

Children will line up against the wall before re-entry, whilst the exiting classes will enter the yard from the walkway under the covered parking area. Therefore, the bubbles will be able to maintain physical distancing.



Each bubble will use their own yard equipment.

On wet days/ indoor breaks the yard supervising teacher and SNAs assigned to their bubbles will supervise between 5 classes. In this instance – students will eat their lunch while seated with an audio/story playing and the door open. No games or toys will be permissible during this supervision period.

### **Lunches**

Parents must make sure that children bring their lunches to school as they will not be allowed to drop them in during the school day. Children will not be allowed to share their food or drinks with other children. Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per usual practice. They will be encouraged to eat directly from their lunchbox rather than placing items on the table. Parents will be encouraged to wash the lunchbox each evening in hot soapy water.

### **Stationary/School Supplies**

All stationary will be provided by school – children are only permitted to bring a lunchbox with them to school.

### **Clothing**

Parents have been requested to provide warm clothes for their children since the school will be a lot cooler than normal. Parents have been asked to provide the children with a raincoat and runners/walking shoes everyday as per usual.

### **Photocopying.**

Only one person at a time in the photocopying room.

### **Laptops and iPads**

Laptops/iPads will be cleaned using anti-bac/viral wipes after each use.

## **Exiting the school**

The school day ends at 2:40pm. Pupils will start to leave the building from 2:35pm onwards, beginning with Room 10 which is the furthest away from the main entrance, ending with Room 1 at 2:40pm. Pupils will put on a new clean mask whilst in their classroom and exit the building wearing the mask. Teachers will escort the children to their buses.

## **Curriculum**

As a staff, we are very aware that some children may have experienced difficulty during the periods of home learning over the course of the last two school years. Half of our pupils are new to our school. We are keen to help all students to settle into this school year. A large amount of patience, kindness and understanding will be needed from everyone in this regard.

The DES suggested for first term of the 2020/21 school year that all emphasis should be on Literacy, Numeracy, PE and SPHE for the first term of the school year. In this current year we will be giving our focus to all curricular subjects with a particular focus on our reading intervention as is routine for placement in Catherine McAuley NS. We as a staff will be mindful of the [DES/NCCA guidelines for Primary and Special Schools](#) alongside the [Curriculum Guidance](#) issued at the beginning of this school year.

## **Substitute Teachers/SNAs**

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training, and also provide their most recent proof of garda vetting/statutory declaration. A list of available substitutes has been created. The school uses the teacher supply panel for our area – this has limited success as there are three substitute teachers for twenty schools. We also use the SubSeeker service when a teacher cannot be replaced from the supply panel. We will endeavor to fill all absences.

The Deputy Principal is allowed 10 release days - these are substitutable (as per circular 50/2021)

## **Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

A new contract cleaning company has been engaged to A thorough and comprehensive ‘deep clean’ was carried out prior to the first day of term. The school will be thoroughly cleaned for approx. 7 hours every day. Cleaning will be focus on the sanitation of frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities, as well as floors.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own personal work area. These cleaning products and PPE will be stored in the stores beside rooms 1 and 2.

Staff will be required to thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Children will be encouraged to keep their own area clean and will be provided with wipes to sanitise their desk throughout the day. They will also be encouraged to sweep the floor around their desk to keep it clean.

## **7. Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

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

If a child presents as unwell in school with:

Temperature

Persistent cough

Presenting as unwell

Temp 38 degrees c or higher

We will place them in the isolation area and contact parents to collect the child immediately.

Parents are required to contact their doctor or the HSE to seek advice. Neasa or a member of the COVID-19 response committee will follow up with parents with a phone call to check if the medical advice is for the child to return to school or have a Covid test.

The designated isolation area is the enclosed ‘buddy pod area’ at the base of the stairs by the front door. It is safe for two children to be in the isolation area awaiting collection at any one time, with a physical barrier between them. In the event that there are more than two children, presenting with potential Covid 19 symptoms, they will remain in their classroom at a safe 2m distance from the rest of the class. Parents will be

asked to come to school immediately to collect children. When they arrive at school – they will phone Debbie in the office and remain outside the building.

Parents will be asked to indicate/explain all absences on Aladdin Connect – or, to email their child’s teacher with details of absence. The teacher can then specify the reason for absence.

If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required; Neasa or a member of the COVID-19 response team will contact the HSE live helpline on 1800700700 or if there is a more serious/urgent presentation may contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The HSE are no longer engaging in contact tracing in schools. Should the Principal or LWR be informed of a covid positive case in the school – they must contact the Schools Covid Line on 012408785 to seek advice. They will complete a public health assessment with a doctor or nurse to determine next steps/actions. At this time the advice of the HSE to schools regarding the determination of close contacts has changed significantly since 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. The school is being asked to inform parents of a covid positive case at this time, and there are instances where students and adults are not determined as close contacts of a positive index case – when family members in the home are deemed close contacts. This is a significant change.

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 will not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

If an adult presents with symptoms as outlined above – they will go home immediately, and seek advice from their GP.

## **8. Staff Duties**

Because our children come from a wide catchment area and all travel to school on school transport, school staff will be required to wear a mask or a visor when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Online training videos have been sent to staff. These are mandatory viewing.

The staffroom will be available to staff but no more than 6 can be seated at any one time. Remember that a distance of 2 meters is recommended for adults.

Staff toilets are assigned depending on proximity to classroom.

Staff will be encouraged to use their own cups and cutlery.

All food stored in the fridge must be in a sealed container.

No children will be allowed to touch the small fridges that store the children's sandwiches and milk.

PPE and other equipment is available for all staff in the store on the ground floor.

Gloves and aprons will be available for staff especially when administering First Aid.

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
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they will adhere to the procedure outlined above

Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

## **Meetings**

All large meetings will take place in the hall but some smaller meetings (among staff) may be facilitated in the school with mask wearing/adequate ventilation and physical distancing.

All meetings with people other than staff will be done remotely for the moment. Teachers will have the option of facilitating parent teacher meetings in October in person (with mask wearing/adequate ventilation and physical distancing) or remotely – depending on what they are comfortable with.

Children will not travel through the school for any reason other than going in and out to the yard or the bus, and going to the toilet.

## **9. COVID-19 related Absence Management**

The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education. All absences will be entered on the OLCS system. In line with the Roadmap for Primary and Special schools – in the event of a staff absence: the principal will try to find a substitute teacher. All staff absences are now substitutable. In the event that a substitute cannot be engaged for the day, Neasa will ask Ciara McCauley – our resource teacher – to fill the position for that day. If Ciara is already subbing in another classroom (in the event of more than one staff absence) Neasa will teach in that room for the day. It is important to note that this will have an impact on the essential work that Ciara McCauley does with students who present with additional and complex needs. This will also have an impact on the work of the Principal – which may have an effect on how quickly other issues of discipline on the bus can be dealt with – or other aspects of the management of the code of behaviour, as well as emergencies that may present.

## **10. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team. An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of *'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'*.

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. To make contact to avail of counselling use the following details: Freephone 1800 411 057 WhatsApp & SMS: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010

## **APPENDIX 1 Class Pods and Bubbles**

**These groupings will be maintained for breaks, yard, assemblies and trips. Integrity of class groupings will be maintained within ‘bubbles’ for these activities**

Each class has 10 pupils and a teacher; 8 classes have shared access to a SNA. The pupils and their teacher and SNA constitute a “Pod”. The pupils in a pod may interact with each other within a distance of 1 metre without face coverings. A “Bubble” is a grouping of 3 to 4 classes/pods which stays apart from other bubbles as much as possible (except on school buses). Bubbles may share resources e.g. PE equipment etc.

### **Pods**

Pod 1: Room 1, Fiona Cronin and Joan Lacy

Pod 2: Room 2 and Eimear Walsh and Evelyn Kinney

Pod 3: Room 3, Patti Roche and Evelyn Kinney

Pod 4: Room 4 Lurn Bradley and Joan Lacey

Pod 5: Room 5, Aoife Kennedy and Karen O’Brien

Pod 6: Room 6, Deirdre Callanan and Carmel Hennessy

Pod 7: Room 7, Audrey Murphy

Pod 8: Room 8, Emma Jackson

Pod 9: Room 9, Fionnula Ní Chinnéide and Karen O’Brien

Pod 10: Room 10, Mary McKinley and Carmel Hennessy



### **Bubbles for yard**

Bubble 1: Rooms 1, 4, 6, 8 and 10 Carmel and Joan

Bubble 2: Rooms 2,3,5,7,9 Karen and Evelyn

Supervision of duty teachers class by Ciara/Neasa

### **Room pairings for assembly / trips**

Room 1 and 10 & Carmel

Rooms 4,6,and 8 & Joan

Rooms 3,7,2 & Evelyn

Rooms 5 and 9 & Karen

.

## Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigating Actions	Further Action required/taken