

Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol Covid-19 Response Plan

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1. Introduction

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has provided all primary and special schools with documents pertaining to the safe and sustainable reopening of these organisations. These documents which have been shared with all school staff are:

Reopening Our Schools: The Road Map for the Full Return to Schools (DES, July 27th 2020)
COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of Primary and Special Schools (DES, July 27th 2020)

- **Returning to School:** Curriculum Guidance for Primary School Leaders and Teachers (July 2020)
- **Guidance for Primary Schools** and Special Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment (7th August 2020)

This Covid-19 Response Plan outlines the local arrangements that have been put in place by the Board of Management of Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol, as guided by the DES and as discussed and agreed by the staff of Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol prior to re-opening for all children on Monday, August 31st 2020. This document may overlap in part with the DES Response Plan but its aim is to inform, draw attention and clarify our arrangements, procedures and processes for a safe return to school.

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol and details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*' requirements, the Department of Education and Skill's plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and 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). As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change. The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie

The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the over-riding 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 requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document also aims to provide details of **Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol's COVID-19 Policy** which 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.

2. Covid-19 Policy

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol 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 plan and amend this plan as necessary 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

- appoint 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 and Skills
 - keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
 - ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education and Skills
 - 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 and Skills 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) Arlene Bhreathnach and/or Nóirín Bhreathnach.

3. Planning and Preparing for Return to Work

(a) **Induction Training**

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of covid-19 and how it impacts on the day to day running of the school.

(b) **Procedure for returning to work**

- All members of staff must complete and return a Return to Work form three days before returning to work.
- Staff have been advised that if they are in a very high-risk category, they should contact the HSE for more information regarding their fitness to return.
- The school has been maintained well since the closure on March 12th 2020 and all potential areas for concern have been examined (e.g. water supply, etc.)
- Posters and other signage will be displayed all over the school.
- Classrooms have been re-configured to maximise all available space and to assist with social distancing where possible.
- New arrangements for drop off and collection times have been made to facilitate social distancing and the safe entry and exit of all children and therefore to prevent infection and the spread of COVID-19.
- Our health and safety risk assessment has been and will continue to be updated, when necessary, to reflect any changes due to COVID-19 containment.
- Necessary measures have been made to limit unnecessary visitors to our school and a visitor's log is to be maintained to record these. Every visitor must sign in on entry to the school.

(c) **Lead Worker Representative**

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.

Arlene Bhreathnach has been appointed as Lead Worker Representative, in line with her Assistant Principal duties with Nóirín Bhreathnach as her deputy. She volunteered for this duty and has been briefed on the nature and responsibilities of this role (p.35 of COVID-19 Response Plan).

(d) Updated safety and Risk Assessment

Our school has adopted the COVID-19 Risk Assessment template as provided by the DES.

A key element of this relates to social distancing. Our school will operate to ensure that all classes remain in ‘bubbles’ – this means that they will not be interacting with children in other classes. Within classes, children will also be assigned to ‘pods’ and these pods will not interact with other pods in the same class, insofar as is practicable. Please note that each class’ previous teacher will assign the children to their pods.

(e) Access to the School and Contact Log

- Due to COVID-19, all visitors to the school must make an appointment beforehand.
- All visitors must complete a Contact Log form. The data provided in these Contact Forms will only be used for tracking and tracing purposes if advised by the HSE.
- These Contact Log forms will be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Acts.

(f) Personal Protection Equipment and Consumables (PPE)

- Our Board of Management has purchased a supply of PPE for use by staff.
- Each class will have a stock of PPE and also a hand sanitiser unit.

Changes to the day-to-day running of Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol

1. Arrival and Departure.

(a) Daily Morning Arrival

We have made some changes to the drop off and pick up arrangements for the children coming to school from August 31st. This is to facilitate their safe arrival and exit with social distancing in mind.

Where possible and if safe to do so, we request that children walk or cycle to school to avoid congestion at school gates.

Each family will be assigned an entry point and time which you will receive shortly.

At 8.40am the gates will be opened. The pupils will enter the school maintaining social distancing through one of the three doors at the designated time. It is set down only and parents are requested not to enter the school building. Please only stop and let your child out when you have reached the assigned school door so that children are not crossing in front of traffic.

For those parents assigned the Tesco side, unfortunately we have inadequate space to allow cars enter the school grounds on this side. Therefore, we are asking you to park outside the school grounds and walk the children in. We really appreciate your cooperation in this regard.

(b) Daily Departure: From 1.20-1.30 pm for Infants & 2:20-2.30pm 1-6 class.

The children will be released to their assigned door at the set time allocated to each family. You will receive times and details shortly.

2. Staggered Break Times

To ensure that social distancing can be maintained, there will be staggered break times for all classes. The amount of break time will remain at the standard 40 minutes per school day (2 x 20 min breaks.) The school yard will be clearly marked and classes/ bubbles allocated specific spaces. Children will be regularly reminded to stay within their pods & bubbles and maintain social distancing on the yard. There will be sanctions if they repeatedly disobey the teachers on duty.

3. Access to school buildings

Access to the school building during the school day by parents or visitors will not be allowed unless absolutely necessary and pre-arranged. This is being done as an infection prevention measure. If your child has to be picked up during school hours this must be arranged in advance with the class teacher via e-mail and a set time given.

4. Pupil's Personal belongings

Children should not bring unnecessary items to school e.g., toys, keyrings, fancy colouring pencils, balls etc. Children should have one pencil case for school containing the basics i.e. pencil, pens, eraser, parer, ruler & colours. This should stay in school and should have their name clearly visible on the outside. They should have a separate pencil case at home for use at home.

5. School Curriculum

We are mindful that the children have not been in school since mid-March. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families. Each child will be at a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year. The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

In the short term the four main areas of our teaching and learning focus will be:

- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education)
- PE
- Literacy (English and Gaeilge)
- Numeracy and Maths

All other subjects will of course be taught but for the re-entry period in September, all teachers will be focusing on these. The children will continue to enjoy other activities such as art, music and drama as well as work in Science, History and Geography and RE (where applicable).

6. Social Distancing Arrangements

- Junior Infants- 2nd Class. Following DES guidelines there will be no social distancing within the classroom but children will be assigned to pods.
- 3rd -6th class. Following DES guidelines, children will practice social distancing and will be strictly assigned to pods. They will work and play with children in their allocated pods.
- Staggered entrance, exit and break times will help to implement social distancing.
- A clearly marked one-way system will operate in the school (everyone walks on the right in the corridors.) This will be clearly marked with floor stickers.

- Regular whole-school activities such as Teacht le Chéile, choir and concerts will be accommodated through different formats this year. We will still endeavour to celebrate our children's learning and achievements and encourage a sense of unity and togetherness in a safe manner.

7. Home-School Communication

We continue to recognise the role of the parent as their child's primary educator and to promote meaningful home/school relationships.

In this time of COVID-19, parents may not enter our school except for a scheduled appointment to ensure the safe and sustained reopening of our school. If you wish to make an appointment, please e-mail or call and we will arrange one with you then. Teachers will make a concerted effort to return emails on the same day or next day. Staff members you wish to speak to may also be happy to meet you via Zoom or to call you.

Regarding events for parents organised by the Home School teacher, these are also suspended for the time being but the HSCL officer will be in contact with all families over the coming weeks.

8. Parent Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher Meetings (Usually end of Nov) may take place via phone or be postponed. We will assess the situation closer to the time.

9. Homework

As the children settle back into school, they will not be assigned any written homework for the first part of the term. However, homework will gradually be reintroduced and assigned homework may be based on online activities as selected by the teacher.

10. Uniforms:

Labelling: Please label your child's school jumper and any jackets which are brought to school. This is particularly important this year as we do not want to send home the wrong jumper to a different house.

Washing: There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families. However, their uniforms/tracksuit must be clean and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols.

Parents should change their child's uniform/tracksuit **at least twice during the week** and they must be washed after use. The school tracksuit may be worn on any day.

Outside school: As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities.** Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc. If the uniform has to be worn after school, please wash it before wearing it to school again.

Shoes: The pupils of junior/senior /first class should wear Velcro fastened shoes. Please ensure that older children are capable of tying shoe-laces before they wear laced shoes to school.

Other: We may take extra breaks or do some lessons outside so please ensure your child wears sun cream/ hat as appropriate.

11. Lunches

School lunches will continue to be delivered daily from Monday 7th September and our healthy Lunch policy remains in place. Forms for the school lunch will be sent out the first week back. The children should have a reusable sturdy drinks bottle with them every day. If necessary, it can be refilled with water during the school day.

12. PPE

The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines for children under the age of 13.

5. Control Measures – To Prevent the Introduction and Spread of Covid-19

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.

Key facts about Covid-19

COVID – 19 is a new illness that can affect the lungs and airways and is caused by a new virus called the Coronavirus.

Coronavirus is spread in sneeze or cough droplets. To infect you, it has to get from an infected person's nose or mouth into your eyes, nose or mouth. This can be direct or indirect (on hands, objects, surfaces). If you come into close contact with someone who is shedding the virus and who is coughing or sneezing or if you touch - with your hands - surfaces or objects that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on, and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes without having washed your hands thoroughly you may contract the virus.

As COVID-19 is a new illness, we are still learning about how easily the virus spreads from person to person and how to control it, so it is important to keep up to date and make sure you are using the most up to date guidance available. This information is available from the following links:

- HSE-HPSC: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>
 - HSE Hub: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
 - Department of Health: <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/7e0924-latest-updates-on-covid-19- coronavirus/>
- COVID-19 can be a mild or severe illness. Severe illness is much more common in older people (especially older than 70) and in people vulnerable for other reasons. Severe illness is much less common in children and young adults in good health. (See below)

(a) Know the Symptoms

The most common symptoms of Covid 19 are:

- Cough - this can be any kind of cough, usually dry but not always
- Fever - high temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
- Shortness of Breath
- Breathing Difficulties
- Lack of smell.

Symptomatic people appear to be most infectious for other people in the early days after symptoms begin. Infection can also spread from people in the day or two before they get symptoms and it can spread from some people who get an infection but have no symptoms or such mild symptoms that they take little notice of them (asymptomatic spread). People are no longer infectious for other people 14 days after they have developed symptoms.

(b) Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

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>

(1) Hand Hygiene

- Hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.
- We promote good hand hygiene and will display posters throughout the schools following HSE guidelines about how to wash your hands.
- Washing your hands with soap and water as per HSE guidelines is more effective than hand sanitiser alone.
- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
- Hand sanitiser (alcohol-based) dispensers have been installed throughout the school.
- Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and disposable hand towels are provided for each class.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school
- Before eating or drinking
- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When their hands are physically dirty
- When they cough or sneeze

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.

(2) Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette

Respiratory hygiene is vital to prevent the spread of respiratory infections. How?

- Covering nose/mouth using disposable tissues when coughing, or sneezing
- Disposing of tissue in the nearest bin after use
- Performing hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials
- Keeping hands away from mucous membranes of the eyes and nose

(3) Social distancing

Maintain social or physical distancing that is, leave at least 1 metre and ideally 2 meters' distance between yourself and other people where possible, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.

(4) Use of PPE in Schools (DES, 7th August 2020)

- The DES does not recommend that children attending primary school or pre-school settings wear face masks.
- The Board of Management has purchased PPE for staff members.
- All of the PPE meets the necessary standards.
- Staff members will wear a mask or a visor when they are unable to maintain a 2-meter distance from other staff or children.
- Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid.
- Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per our Health and Safety Statement.
- Masks must be worn in the school building by all visitors unless he or she has difficulty breathing or may have an additional need that prevents them from being able to, i.e. any person with sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

Our class teachers will complete multiple lessons on correct hygiene, lining up, the importance of hand sanitising, staying within their pods/bubbles etc. with the children during the first weeks back in school.

6. Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

Cleaning

- We are lucky that we already have a cleaner who works every day. Teachers will also be regularly cleaning their classrooms throughout the day.
- We have invested in all the necessary materials needed to keep our school as clean as possible.
- The Board of Management has also purchased sufficient cleaning products for every classroom for use during the school day.
- Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school are being made.
- School cleaning will be covered by the Induction training that will be provided by the DES to all members of staff.
- Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, taps, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.
- Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- There will be regular collection of waste.

- 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/area will be cleaned as soon as practicably possible by a nominated member of staff.
- Once the room is vacated the room will 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.
- The assigned staff member cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear PPE when carrying out the cleaning.
- 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 the staffroom, 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.

Aistear Settings

- All toys should be cleaned on a regular basis.
- Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.
- Only machine-washable toys or cloth items to be used
- 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.
- Any broken, cracked or dirty play equipment that cannot be repaired or cleaned will be discarded.
- Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed.
- Each child will have their own tub of Playdoh

Other Shared Resources

- Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards will be thoroughly cleaned after every use. Musical equipment and instruments should not be shared between pupils.
- Textbooks will not be shared. In classes where readers are shared they will be covered with contact so they can be wiped clean after use.
- The sharing of sports equipment will be minimised and cleaning will take place after use where items are shared.

First Aid/emergency procedure

- The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol bearing in mind precautions with the risk of covid-19.

7. 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 a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

- Our school has a designated isolation area – beside the office and near the main door and a second isolation room (storage room beside office.)
- These areas contain all necessary PPE and other items to keep the child comfortable until a parents/guardian arrives to take them home.

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

- If the person with the suspected case is a child, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- The child will be assured that everything is okay and that they will be fine
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area on their side of the school and a distance of 2m will be kept from the child
- The child will be given a face mask to wear
- 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 or whether an ambulance should be called for
- Help the child as they remain in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and call their doctor. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects
- The child should be told 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 – (*details at Section 6.a.*).
- 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.

8. 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. Therefore, parents/guardians must have a heightened

awareness of signs, symptoms or changes which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection. Where symptoms are present, children should not attend school.

9. Staff Duties

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. 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.
- ii. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- iii. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- iv. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.
- v. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- vi. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- vii. Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- viii. Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- ix. Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- x. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- xi. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

10. Covid related absence management

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

11. 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.

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'.

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.

12. Role of Parents:

The following are protocols that are put in place to safeguard the health and safety of each other. Parents are expected to abide by them and failure to do so may result in a parent being instructed to remove a child from the school building/yard, and or to leave the school premises themselves. If serious breaches of safety measures occur, the board and or the Gardaí may be informed or called if needed.

Under no circumstances is a parent to bring a child to school if -

- **If the child is exhibiting any symptoms of Covid 19-**
- **If the child has a temperature, is sneezing, coughing, short of breath or who has been vomiting or has diarrhoea.**
- **If a child has been outside of the country in the 14 days prior to August 27th, they are not to attend school but must isolate**
- **If the child has been in contact with any family member and or other person who has Covid.**

Arrival and departure procedures for children and parents:

Parents must arrive on time for leaving in and collecting their child.

Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of COVID-19 or who have served the required quarantine time of 14 days where advised are allowed to drop off and collect children.

- Any parent who is in a high risk category should not drop off or collect children in order to protect themselves. (This of course is at the discretion of the individual parent/carer/grandparent's discretion)
- Staggered arrival times will be put in place between 8.40 am and 9.00 am. (See below)
- On entering the school yard, a parent sends the child(ren) into the school where they will wait in their classroom. Under no circumstances are parents to linger in the yard after the child has been handed over but are to leave immediately.
- Home times will be staggered for classes from first to sixth- 2.20pm and 2.30pm.
- Parents must wait outside the school in their cars and maintain social distancing in the evening time when waiting to collect a child. A parent must line up at the designated door, maintaining social distancing and wait for their child.
- The junior and senior infants will go home at the normal time exiting through different doors where possible.
- All must leave the yard immediately after collection.

- No parent will be allowed within the school building.
- **Should a matter of urgency arise for parents,** they must phone the office and make an appointment for access. Access will only be permitted on arrangement and parents are requested to wear a face covering (unless they are unable to for reasons outlined above) and use hand sanitiser at the entrance. Once inside the school building, they must maintain the required social distance and follow the directions of the principal/staff member.
- At arrival and departure times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.
- Under no circumstances are parents and carers to gather in groups while waiting for their children.
- Arrival and collection times will be staggered to avoid groups of parents/children congregating together
- Families have been assigned specific doors noted **Doors A, B & C** (which will be labelled.)