



ASHBOURNE
EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Covid-19 School Response Plan Primary Schools

All schools are required to have a Covid-19 Response Plan in place in order to reopen safely in the new school year. Please be advised that this is a working document and 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. The most updated response plan will be published on the Ashbourne ETNS website. www.ashbourneetns.ie

Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM)/Education Training Board (ETB) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in **Ashbourne Educate Together National School (AETNS)**.

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 the safe and sustainable operation of Primary Schools.

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 operation of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

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

This document aims to provide details of:

- **COVID-19 School Policy**
- **Reviewing the safe operation of schools**
- **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
- **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
- **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
- **Infection Control, Measures - To Prevent Introduction and Spread of Covid 19**
- **Hygiene & Cleaning in School Control Measures**
- **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
- **Special Educational Needs**
- **Staff Duties**
- **Covid related absence management**
- **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, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie;

Appendix 1 Ashbourne Educate Together National School (AETNS) 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

AETNS 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 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) LW Sally Casey , DLW Fiona Hayden.

Signed: Noel Gidlea & Barbara Nugent

Date: 26/8/2021

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the continuation of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence with 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.

School Buildings

Before reopening schools in the new school year schools are reminded to check the following:

- Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
- Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
- Have bin collections and other essential services resumed

As recommended AETNS will utilise posters appropriate for the primary school setting from Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and those provided by the Department of Education and Skills. These posters will be displayed in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets AETNS will also use and source posters and distance markers for the school grounds where warranted. Since the introduction of this plan, the school has also purchased large notices relating to physical distancing on the property. These are located in areas where congregation is more likely to happen.

School Layout- The school will continue to promote physical distancing within the school building, in classrooms, staff rooms, areas within the building.

The school will continue to limit the number of external visitors to the school. Only necessary and essential visitors are encouraged to visit the school. A contact log will be maintained within the school. The school will encourage the walking and cycling to school of children in older classes, Parents of children in older classes are encouraged not to enter the school grounds.

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 has been emailed to all staff and is available from the principal. A RTW form should only be completed **at least 3 days** prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace. Following the school closure of June to August 2021.

On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide: details of the **Induction Training for New Staff and Returning Staff** for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility. Following the school Summer closure, all staff will be

required to familiarise themselves again with the induction training.

The School will follow all advice relating to the return to work of Very High Risk staff. A risk assessment will be carried out in relation to Pregnant teachers.

Note: Any further Induction Training for staff , Updated training by the Department in consultation with stakeholders will be made available for all school and staff

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.

Name(s) of Lead Worker representative:	Contact details
Sally Casey (LW) Fiona Hayden (DLW)	sallycas@ashbourneetns.ie fionahay@ashbourneetns.ie

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.

Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment.

AETNS is currently reviewing their emergency procedures involving fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the COVID-19 School Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented.

A risk assessment has been undertaken by AETNS for risks arising to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. This risk assessment will be monitored and reviewed throughout the school year.

General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

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

The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene, follow respiratory etiquette and increase ventilation.

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

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

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms

- Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Advise staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test
- Advise staff and pupils, to follow the HSE advice if they are a close contact of a confirmed case of Covid-19.
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff and pupils are advised to

consult and follow latest Government advices in relation to foreign travel.

- Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
- Advise staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point;
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant) When more is known about the Omicron Variant - more symptoms may be added to the lists below.

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.

Employers and workers must keep themselves up to date on Public Health information as this can be updated on a regular basis. Public Health information on close contacts, casual contacts and testing is available from the HSE website.

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>

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.

Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of hand sanitisers (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.

Alcohol- based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or a naked flame

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.

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.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

Where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1 metre distance and where possible 2 metres from students. 2 metre physical distance should be maintained at all times between staff members, including break times.

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

Staff "should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down".

It is also recognised by the Department of Education 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. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore achieving this minimum 1metre recommendation from Junior infants – 2nd class , is not a pre-requisite to reopening the school

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. Links to all aforementioned guidance can be accessed [here](#). The school has received 10 Carbon Dioxide Monitors which are spread out around the school.

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.

Do

- Wash 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

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.

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:

The list of people in very high risk groups 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 immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis,

lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD

- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression 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.

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:

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. 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.

Induction Training

All new 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 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 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.

The Department has prepared short induction training for new staff in schools. This will be shared with new staff prior to the start of school and will be shared with all staff if they wish to rewatch the training

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>

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 be available in each classroom and entry and exit points.

Face Coverings/Masks

The wearing of face coverings or masks in general is not a substitute for other measures outlined below (physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, adequate ventilation, minimising contacts) but they may be used in addition to these protective measures, especially where maintaining physical/social distancing is difficult.

Please note that from November 29th 2021 the Government and NPHET recommended that children from 3rd-6th class wear face masks in school, as a temporary measure. This will be revised in spring 2022. *(Please find letter to schools from the Department of Education & the Chief Medical Officer, at the back of this document).*

Stories and exercises about face masks should take place to explain the use of PPE to children. Children under the age of 13 do not need to 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.

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

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups: · Any person with difficulty breathing

- 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.

Medical Grade Masks

AETNS will provide medical grade masks in the EN14683 category to all SNAs in the school and to teachers in our special classes and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs.

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

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will not be required to be worn within the school facility according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.

Such include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

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

Wearing of Gloves:

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. The BOM of AETNS will provide access to gloves for use for intimate care need of students, necessary classroom rubbish removal and in dealing with suspected cases of Covid-19

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.

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.) Communal Cutlery and Delph is not to be used.

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

First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in **AETNS**

In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 Contact the principal or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

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 **AETNS** will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

Isolation Room 1: Disability toilet at GP hall fire Exit Door

Isolation Room 2: Disability toilet at staff car park Fire Exit Door.

Emergency Back up: Individual Toilet cubicles along the PE hall corridor

Isolation Route A: (Downstairs) From Classroom, **directly** along the main corridor, through blue double doors to Isolation room 1, without delay or stopping. Do not use any other route/back corridors. If Isolation room 1 is not accessible, direct route along main corridor to Isolation room 2.

Isolation Route 2: (upstairs) From Classroom, **directly** along main upstairs corridor. Using stairs at the **back of** the building access downstairs corridor along main downstairs corridor, through blue double doors to Isolation room 1, without delay or stopping. Do not use any other route/back corridors. If Isolation room 1 is not accessible, direct route along main corridor to Isolation room 2.

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 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 also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times;
- 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 where applicable will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process.

Changes to contact tracing occurred in September. Currently if a child tests positive, the Principal will contact Parents of the other children in the pod so that they can avail of antigen tests, children can continue to come to school once they are showing no symptoms. The school will update the response plan if any of the above changes. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and **staff confidentiality is essential at all times.**

School Staff should be encouraged to download the HSE Covid-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting

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.

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:

- 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.
- 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 and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19
- Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work
- 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
- 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
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same
- Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - ❖ If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - ❖ If they have travelled outside Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest government advice in relation to foreign travel
- 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

Covid related absence management

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

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 Employee Assistance Service (EAS) provides teachers and immediate family members, i.e. partner, spouse or adult child (aged 18 and over) residing at the same address as the employee, with access to confidential counselling and assists in coping with the effect of personal and work-related issues. Counselling is provided on issues such as health, relationships, addictions, bereavement, stress, conflict, critical incident and trauma.

The service is free and confidential and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to teachers in schools. It is provided by Inspire Workplace Services which was formerly known as Carecall.

Free Phone: 1800 411 057

Email: support@carecallwellbeing.ie or make contact via the website.

Visit the Inspire Workplaces website