



## **Covid-19 Response Plan**

**1)** This COVID-19 Response Plan is designed to support the Staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Abbeyleix South National School.

**2)** This 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 developmental needs of the children in the school.

The assistance of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is essential to the success of the plan.

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.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie), [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

### **3) School Covid-19 Policy**

Please see Appendix 1

### **4) Planning and Preparing for return to work**

#### **4.1) 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 the following:

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

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and

will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

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

#### **4.2) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW) / Return to school (REFPDF)**

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available online or from the principal. A copy is attached also at **Appendix 2**.

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Schools should request staff to confirm that the details in the Return to Work Form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

The principal will also provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff 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.

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at **very high risk**. This will be updated in line with public health advice. **Appendix 2a**

Parents of children attending during the phase from March 1, 2021 will be asked by the school to complete the Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration form (REFPDF).

#### **Appendix 2b**

#### **4.3) Lead Worker Representative**

Lead Worker Representatives Karen Lynam (LWR) and Deputy Lead Worker Representative (DLWR) Geraldine Whiteford, in collaboration with the Board of Management, will assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and will monitor adherence to those measures and will be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the

workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, pupils or others he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the principal/BOM.

Full details of the arrangements which will apply for the LWR in primary is set out at **Appendix 3**.

#### **4.4) Display Signage**

You will see many new signs inside and outside the school building. These have been installed to support the teaching at home and in school of the following:

- Hand Hygiene
- Physical distancing, where possible
- Cough and sneeze etiquette

#### **4.5) Making Changes to School Layout**

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key infection prevention control measures to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Further information on how physical distancing can be used in the school environment is found at **Section 5.4** below.

#### **4.6) Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment and a risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in the school setting has been completed.

We have reviewed our emergency procedures involving, fire safety, First Aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

#### **4.7) Access to School and Contact Log**

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior

approval from the principal. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained. Unfortunately in these times you cannot enter the school.

All such records and data will be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. **Appendix 4**

## **5) Infection Prevention Control Measures- To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools**

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.

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

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (**details at Section 5.1**);
- 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 not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
  - if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
  - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
  - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- 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 (**details at Section 8**);
- 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 will be by prior arrangement and will be received at a specific contact point (the front door lobby);
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

### **5.1) Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- ✓ High temperature
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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.

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

If you have any common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a COVID-19 test. Other people in your household will need to restrict their movements (stay at home).

Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website.

### **5.2) Respiratory Hygiene**

Staff and pupils need to know the importance of good respiratory measures to limit the spread of the virus.

- avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
- cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
- dispose of tissues in a covered bin

### **5.3) Hand Hygiene**

The School will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the school on how to wash hands.

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean). There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

The use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins will be managed so as to avoid congregation of pupils and staff waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

Hand sanitising stations have been placed in all classrooms (away from heat) and throughout the whole school.

It is advised that pupils and staff wash their hands or use hand sanitiser

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

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

#### **5.4) Physical Distancing**

##### **Increasing separation**

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom we have :

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing. This is to facilitate 1 metre distancing for pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class as required by the DES. **The teacher's desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.**
2. Utilised and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing
3. Rooms have been cleared of any unnecessary furniture/shelves etc. on the walls.

##### **Decreasing interaction**

1. Your child will be in a Class Bubble, a class grouping which stays apart from other classes during the school day as much as possible.

2. Each Class bubble will be grouped into pods. There will be at least (1m distance) between individual Pods.
- Staff will be consistently with the same class bubble where possible.
  - Each child will have an individual box for their books on their desk.
  - Sharing personal belongings should be avoided/ minimised where possible. We can no longer share colouring pencils, crayons, pencils, pens etc.

**Please ensure that your child has all items listed on the class booklists which you received in June and which can be viewed on the school website.**

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

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

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

#### **School drop off/collection**

- We must limit all interaction on arrival and departure from school. Parents /Guardians are asked to avoid congregating.
- Drop off and collection times will be staggered. Parents are asked to remain in their cars until their child comes to the car at home time. This helps the traffic flow.
- Walking/cycling to school is encouraged as much as possible. Please confirm in writing if your child is walking or cycling home from school.
- Parents/Guardians will not be permitted to enter the school building.

**Please note that school grounds will not be accessible for entry before 9a.m. and only for the specified families at that time. Children should**

**not be dropped to school before their allocated class time.**

### **Staff**

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.

If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and updated guidance on face covering should be observed.

Physical distancing will be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks etc.

Staff meetings should be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

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

### **Yard break / lunchtime**

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

Break times and outdoor access will be staggered allowing a single class bubble at any time.

Each class bubble will enter and exit their classroom from their patio door. 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class will use the rear door beside the staffroom.

Children will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

Each class bubble has a set of equipment. It will be cleaned regularly. **See Appendix 5**

### **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.

### **Resources- cleaning**

Our school equipment and furniture have been washed, disinfected and some disposed of where necessary.

There will be a cleaning timetable in place, daily and weekly. This will include all items. E.g. Laptops, P.E equipment

Frequently touched objects and surfaces will be disinfected regularly.

### **5.5) Use of PPE in School**

The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education has recommended that face coverings should be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils. The Department has accepted this recommendation. Accordingly, it is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category
- Administering first aid
- Parent Teacher meetings

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

We would also like to advise that cloth face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of 13 and anyone who

- has trouble breathing
- is unconscious or incapacitated
- is unable to remove it without help
- has special needs and may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing a

face covering

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

Cloth Masks should be...

- washed daily
- changed if they are wet
- Whilst staff may wish to utilise their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools will have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings, or if appropriate face visors, available for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.
- Staff will be supplied with medical face masks for specific circumstances where the use of medical face masks, to EU Standard EN 14683, may be more appropriate for staff (for example where staff by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs such as SNAs).

## **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for cleaning, intimate care settings and when administering first aid. Routine use does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves.

## **Aprons**

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

## **6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities**

### ***Singing Performance***

Singing performances may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration will be given to ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and

the distance between performers is maintained.

## **Toys**

All toys will be cleaned on a regular basis. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.

Toys that are visibly broken, dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.

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

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

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

Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed.

At this time soft modelling materials and play dough where used should be for individual use only.

### Cleaning Procedure for Toys

- Wash the toy in warm soapy water, using a brush to get into crevices.
- Rinse the toy in clean water.
- Thoroughly dry the toy.
- Some hard plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher.
- Toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried.
- In some situations toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning for example: toys/equipment that pupils place in their mouths. Toys/equipment that have been soiled with blood or body fluids or toys where a case of COVID-19 has been identified.
- If disinfection is required: A chlorine releasing disinfectant should be used diluted to a concentration of 1,000ppm available chlorine. The item should be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

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

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

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

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

Shared Sports Equipment – Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people/ class bubbles.

## 7) **Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

The classrooms will be cleaned at **daily**. Cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, desktops, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.

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

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from the office, classrooms and toilets within the school facility.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.) Please place school utensils/spoons in the dishwasher after use.

### ***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 the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

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

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

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

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

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

If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a canteen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then

the areas will be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

## **8) 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 our school will deal with a suspected case that may arise.

A designated isolation area will be identified within our school building.(The Red Room).

The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases has put in place. The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

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

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians/alternative contact will be contacted immediately.  
**Please make sure we have up to date contact numbers for all.**
- The person will be isolated and a procedure is 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.
- Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room.
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil will wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin.
- A mask will be provided 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.
- An assessment will be made as to whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home /be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.

- The person presenting with symptoms will be remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice will be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue/mask provided when they cough or sneeze and put the item in the waste bag provided.
- If the pupil is well enough to go home, a family member will transport them home, as soon as possible and will be advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind will not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, 999 or 112 will be contacted to inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- An assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery will be carried out.
- The appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved will be completed immediately.

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.

## **9) Special Educational Needs**

### **Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs**

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

#### *Hand hygiene*

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

#### *Equipment*

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting

aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

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

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

## **10) 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. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if



- they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
  - Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
    - if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
    - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
    - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
  - If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
  - Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
  - Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
  - Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

**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.**

### **11) 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.

### **12) 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*'.

The EAS is a self-referral service where employees have access to 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. The service is also available via SMS, WhatsApp, e-mail, live chat and call back request. All points of contact for the service are qualified, accredited and experienced mental health professionals.

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 is available which offers access to podcasts, blogs, live chats and videos on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. E-Learning programmes across mental health, sleep and a range of wellbeing topics are 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. A series of weekly webinars and live talks to promote staff wellbeing in schools is current available on the wellbeing portal.

### **Supporting the Wellbeing of School Communities**

There are five essential principles for wellbeing promotion at times like this. These are promoting

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

### **Supports will include:**

- A comprehensive communications campaign, delivering universal messages of safety and wellbeing to all
- Webpage with access to all information relating to the reopening of schools, including information about wellbeing, with links to specific resources, guidance and support
- Wellbeing Webinars for primary schools - supporting wellbeing as schools reopen
- Wellbeing Toolkit for Teachers with a range of easily downloadable, user-friendly materials
- Services provided by the National Educational Psychological Service
- Access to a range of support/resources and professional learning opportunities
- e-mental health services, including on-line counselling, provided by the HSE/HSE-funded service providers including spunout.ie, Jigsaw, My Mind,

### **Promoting School Staff Wellbeing**

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 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.

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.

There is a lot of information in this document. Please read it carefully and keep it safely for future reference. This is a living document and as such is subject to change.



# Abbeyleix South National School

*Scoil Náisiúnta Mainistir Laoise Theas*

## COVID-19 Policy Statement

Abbeyleix South 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 Board of Management 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 on-going basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through

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

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

**Appendix 2****Return to Work Form**

This form must be completed by staff in advance of returning to work. If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: Abbeyleix South NS

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3	Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?		
4	In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?		
5	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
6	Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time?		
7	Have you been advised to cocoon at this time? Note: if you're at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 you may be advised to cocoon.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

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

## Appendix 2a

### **People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):**

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if 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
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they 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 are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the working arrangements that apply to the very high risk school staff, is in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, and is detailed in the relevant Department of Education circulars available on the Department's website.

**Appendix 2b**



**Return to Educational Facility Parental  
Declaration Form**

<b>Child's Name:</b>	<b>Principal's Name: Geraldine Whiteford</b>
<b>Parents/Guardian's Name:</b>	
<b>Name of Setting:  Abbeyleix South N.S</b>	
This form is to be used when children are returning to the setting after any absence.	
Declaration: I have no reason to believe that my child has infectious disease and I have followed all medical and public health guidance with respect to exclusion of my child from educational facilities.  Signed _____  Date: _____	

### **Appendix 3 Lead Worker Representative – Primary and Special Schools**

The Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put infection control measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour Employer Economic Forum.

The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

The purpose of this section is to set out the provisions in respect of the LWR in schools. The operation of these arrangements will be kept under review by the parties.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- The Work Safely Protocol.
- the [Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19](#);
- COVID-19 Response Plan for Primary and Special Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

#### **1. Collaborative Approach**

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated infection prevention control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management/ Education and Training Board and school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils. Adherence to the Work Safely Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management.

#### **2. Role of the Lead Worker Representative**

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:



- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, 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 school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to infection prevention control measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

### **3. What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?**

The LWR may consult with, and make representations to, school management on any issue of concern in relation to COVID-19. These include issues in relation to:

- Cleaning protocols and their implementation
- Physical Distancing
- Implementation of one-way systems in the school to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the school
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the school
- Respiratory hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment

- At Risk Groups
- Visitors/Contractors

#### **4. Lead Worker Representative**

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

#### **5. Deputy Lead Worker Representative/ Assistant Lead Worker Representative**

In schools with less than 30 staff, a Deputy Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Deputy LWR will be to deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent.

In schools with 30 or more staff and in all Special schools, an Assistant Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Assistant LWR will be to:

- assist the LWR in their duties as set out above; and
- deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

#### **6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR**

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR, Deputy LWR and Assistant LWR positions as appropriate. The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR represents all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, if a teacher is selected for the role of LWR, then the Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR should be selected from the non-teaching staff where feasible and vice versa.

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR as appropriate should be arrived at by consultation and consensus at school level, through the seeking of volunteers to act in that capacity. Where there is more than one volunteer, all school staff should vote to select the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR.

The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the employer. LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have completed the provided training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

#### **7. Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR**

The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR shall be entitled to:

- Receive information and training in respect of their role;
- Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19;
- Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19;
- Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures;

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a teacher (including a postholder), the 10 Croke Park hours which can currently be used for planning on other than a whole school basis will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is an SNA, 10 of the “72 hours” will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a Secretary or Caretaker, a re-prioritisation of duties by school management should be carried out to afford the staff member sufficient time to carry out their duties in that role.

## **8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise**

Where an issue of concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR may notify the Board of Management (Chairperson of the BoM in the first instance)/ Education and Training Board head office of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the BoM/ETB head office. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

**Appendix 4**

**Contact Tracing Log**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Abbeyleix South NS</b>		<b>School Contact Person</b>	
<b>Address of School</b>	<b>Ballacolla rd.</b>		<b>For Queries only: Phone No</b>	<b>057 8731920</b>
	<b>ABBEYLEIX</b>		<b>Email : office@abbeyleixsouthns.ie</b>	
<b>Name of Visitor</b>				Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Date of Visit</b>	___ / ___ / _____	<b>Time</b>	<b>Entry to school</b>	<b>Exit from School</b>
			_____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Visitor Status</b>	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please complete: _____	
<b>Contact details of visitor</b>	Company Name (if applicable)			
	Address			
	Contact No.		Email Address	
	Reason for Visit			
<b>Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)</b>				
<b>Name of Person visited</b>				<b>Length of time spent with each person in the school</b>

## **Appendix 5**

### **School Arrangements to Implement Social Distancing**

The aim of the system within our school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day.

Your child will be in a class bubble, a class grouping which will stay apart from other classes during the day.

A one way system will be implemented on arrival to the patio area, parents must continue around to the back of the school if they accompany their child to their classroom door.

Drop off and pick up time will be staggered.

#### **Drop off**

The school grounds are not accessible for pupils and parents until 9am. This is for health and safety reasons.

9.00 am Families with four or three Primary School-going children

9.05 am Families with two Primary School-going children

9.15 am Families with one Primary School-going child

- Children travelling by bus must walk promptly and directly to their classroom using the one way system.
- Please note the gate cannot be opened before 9 a.m. Children must remain in their car until their allocated time. This is in the interest of Health and Safety of all.
- Parents are asked to use the drop off area on the avenue and not to congregate.
- Junior and Senior Infant parents, please park on the church avenue and walk your child to the patio door of the classroom.
- Pupils can then walk into school following the new one way system signs via the patio.

The staff will of course be on hand on the first day back to school to help your child with this system and parents can help by making sure their child knows which classroom they are going to..

There will be no access to the patio areas after 9.20am as teaching will have commenced. After 9.20am you must come to the front door of the school and

sign your child in.

Walking or cycling to school is encouraged as much as possible. **Please confirm in email if your child is walking or cycling home from school.**

### **Pick up**

2.00pm Junior and Senior Infants : collection from classroom Patio.

- Junior and Senior Infants' parents please come to the patio area of your child's classroom to pick up your child.
- Please observe physical distancing. No more than 4 parents on the Infants' patio at a time. As you see a parent leave the patio area you may then enter this area.
- Please do not wait on other classroom patios as this will be distracting to other classes.
- Parents and pupils are not to use the field in front of the church to gather/congregate at any time during the school day.

Our two Special Education Teachers will be overseeing the exit of the children from the classroom to car/bus as the classroom teacher remains in the classroom with the remainder of the children until it is their time to leave.

2.50pm Families with **four or three** Primary School-going children

3.00pm Families with **two** Primary School-going children

3.10pm Families with **one** Primary School-going child

**Please remain in your car**, unless you are using the Church Avenue. If using the Church Avenue you must park and walk to the rear of the Church to meet your child/children. Your child/children **must** know which area they are being collected from.

As you can see these times are unavoidably tight and rely on parents and teachers being punctual at all times.

## Classroom Layout

The layout of the classrooms and furniture has been revised as per Department Guidelines.

Third to Sixth class are required to maintain 1 meter distance where possible.

Class	Classroom	Entry/ exit point
Junior and Senior Infants	Blue Classroom	Door 2 on patio
First and Second	Green Classroom	Door 4 on patio
Third and Fourth	Yellow Classroom	Door 3 on patio
Fifth and Sixth	G.P Hall	Rear door at GP Hall

### Break Time (will be staggered)

10.20 – 10.30	Junior and Senior Infants
10.35 – 10.45	First and Second Class
10.50 – 11.00	Third and Fourth Class
11.05 – 11.15	Fifth and Sixth Class

### Lunch Time (will be staggered)

12.00 – 12.20	Junior and Senior Infants
12.25 – 12.45	First and Second Class
12.50 – 1.10	Third and Fourth Class
1.15 – 1.35	Fifth and Sixth Class