



# Scoil Naomh Lorcán O'Tuathail

## (St. Laurence O'Toole's National School)

Roundwood, Co. Wicklow. Tel/Fax: 01 281 8399 | Email: roundwoodns@gmail.com | Web: roundwoodns.ie

### St Laurence O'Toole's National School Covid-19 Response Plan

#### Introduction

This response plan was ratified by the Board of Management (BOM) of St Laurence O'Toole's National School, Roundwood at a meeting of the Board in February 2021 and is updated regularly based on Government guidelines. This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and the BOM in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in St Laurence O'Toole's N.S. It adheres strictly to the Department of Education and Skill's 'Roadmap for the Full Return to School' and has been updated to include updated recommendations required by 'Work Safely Protocol'.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measure to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change. In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong commitment and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents.

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 to that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

Note: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie), [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie), [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpssc.ie](http://www.hpssc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie), [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

This document aims to provide details of:

1. St Laurence O'Toole's National School COVID-19 Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School and Partial Return to School
  - Induction Training
  - Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

- Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
  - Display signage
  - Making changes to school layout
  - Update Safety and Risk Assessment
  - Access to the School and Contact Log
3. Control Measures
    - Know the Symptoms of COVID-19
    - Respiratory Hygiene
    - Hand Hygiene
    - Physical Distancing
    - Use of PPE in Schools
  4. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities
  5. Hygiene and Cleaning in School
  6. Dealing with a suspected case
  7. Special Educational Needs
  8. Staff Duties
  9. Absence Management
  10. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

## **1. School COVID-19 Policy**

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. Our Covid-19 Policy has been signed and dated by the chairperson and principal of the BOM and brought to the attention of the staff, pupils, parents and others. The school Covid-19 Policy can be viewed at [www.roundwoodns.ie](http://www.roundwoodns.ie).

## **2. Planning and Preparing for the Return to School**

The BOM aims to facilitate the resumption 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 to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

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

The following processes have been put in place to include the following:

- Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates.
- Enhanced cleaning measures in place during the school day.
- Arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils,

- parents and others as required.
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education and updated training materials as necessary.
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- Identified a Lead Worker representative
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment.
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment
- Made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school
- Reviewed the school buildings 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.

### **Induction Training**

All staff will have undertaken and completed Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. Staff will be required to complete any further training or updated training, as advised by the DES or DH. 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.

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

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form,

which is available from the Lead Worker Representative or from the principal. All staff members must submit a RTW form when returning after each school holiday closure. This can be emailed to [lwr@roundwoodns.ie](mailto:lwr@roundwoodns.ie) on the Sunday by 6pm to the Lead Worker Representative.

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

### **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 leukemia, 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 arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools.

### **Lead Worker Representative**

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.

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 who will engage with the principal/BOM.

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

In summary, the role of the LWR is:

- 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 Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice.
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to 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.
- A report will be made to school management weekly regarding control measures in the school, progress, issues arising, future planning
- 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.

<i>Name of Lead Worker Representative</i>	<i>Deputy Lead Worker Representative</i>
Carolanne Healy	Chris Holt

All staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors have a responsibility 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.

### **Display Signage**

The Board of Management has arranged for signage to be displayed throughout the school to highlight the signs and symptoms of COVID- 19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. These are displayed in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

### **Changes to School Layout**

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Classes have been reconfigured and other areas as necessary to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

### **Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A Covid-19 risk assessment has been developed to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings. This can be viewed at [www.roundwoodns.ie](http://www.roundwoodns.ie).

Our Fire Drill Procedures, Accident and Sickness Policy, Critical Incident Policy and Code of Behaviour have been reviewed in light of Covid-19 risks.

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

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in schools. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, schools should call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident. The school's Accident and Sickness Policy and Fire Drill Policy have been updated to take into account Covid-19.

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

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

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 relevant member of staff who they are meeting. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

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

All school records and data will be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts as per the school's Data Protection and Record Keeping Policy.

### **3. Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools**

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 and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

*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.*

#### **The following has been implemented to minimise the Risk of Introduction of Covid-19 into Schools:**

- Staff and pupils that **have symptoms** of Covid-19 are advised not to attend school, to restrict their movements and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation. They are advised to contact their family doctor and to arrange a test.
- Should a student have a positive PCR test their parents are asked to contact the school principal who will then notify the parents of children in their child's pod. Children in the pod should then apply on the HSE website-[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) for an antigen test. The principal can assist you with this process if required. It is advised that 3 antigen tests should be taken over a 5-day period. The children in the pod can still continue to come to school provided they are well and have no covid symptoms. Should a child in another pod, staff member in this class test positive within a seven-day period, then the whole class will be required to go for testing. This process will be carried out under the strictest confidence.
- Pupils are asked not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as **a close contact** of a household confirmed case of COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice.
- Staff are asked not to attend school if they are a close contact of COVID-19 in any capacity, and to follow the HSE advice. There are protocols in place

depending on your personal vaccination status which can be found on the HSE website.

- Staff and pupils are advised not to attend school, if they *live with someone who has symptoms*, and they too have symptoms regardless of vaccination status. Staff and pupils are asked to restrict their movements and seek an antigen test.
- If a child has tested positive for COVID-19 they can return to school providing it has been **10 days** since they first developed symptoms.
- Staff and pupils are advised to follow the latest Government advice when returning from abroad.
- Staff and pupils who develop symptoms at school are asked to bring this to the attention of the principal promptly. The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation tent and parent/guardian will be contacted.
- Staff and pupils are made aware of the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school.
- Staff and pupils must cooperate with any public health officials and 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 use hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement with either the secretary, member of staff or Principal and should be received at a specific contact point; Visitors will be required to fill in the contact tracing log located in the school office. Principal/secretary must be notified of all visitors prior to their appointment.
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

### **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

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](#).

### **COVID-19 Tracker App**

All staff members are advised to download the COVID-19 Tracker app. COVID Tracker app is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

- alert you if you have been in [close contact](#) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)
- keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19
- give you advice on what to do if you have symptoms

You can download the free app from [Apple's AppStore](#) or the [GooglePlay store](#)

### **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 and safely into a nearby bin.

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

### **Hand Hygiene**

Staff and pupils to receive training on hand hygiene and why it is important as well as when

and how to wash their hands.

Good hand hygiene promoted throughout the school and posters displayed throughout the school on how to wash your hands - hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins managed to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

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.

Hand sanitiser dispensers deployed at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms

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

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities provided in all toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas.

Hand washing facilities to be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels should be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them – extra cleaning of toilet areas throughout the school day.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities and can be laminated or placed in a plastic sleeve

### **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

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

### **Physical Distancing**

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, St Laurence O’Toole’s National School have:

1. Reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing
2. Utilised and reconfigured all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing
3. Removed excess furniture from the school building

Pupils and their teachers have been organised into Class Bubbles (i.e., a class grouping which

stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or “Pods” within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical. There will be at least 1m distance between individual Pods within the Class Bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible. The objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff will consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times. Different class/staff bubbles will have separate breaks and lunch times.

Sharing educational material between Pods to be avoided/minimised where possible – plans in place to ensure this occurs.

Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble to be limited as much as possible.

Interactions on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas are limited by use of staggered arrival and dismissal times. Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged.

Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organised to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource.

Staff and pupils to avoid sharing of personal items.

Pupils encouraged to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth).

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

## **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school**

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

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting pupils have been made to encourage physical distancing where possible – see Logistics Reopening Plan at [www.roundwoodns.ie](http://www.roundwoodns.ie) .

### **Staff**

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. There is a requirement that no more than 4 staff members can be in the staffroom at any one time. Four staff members will form a bubble and only those in the bubble will be permitted to eat together in the staff room. SNA's will form their own bubble and will eat together in the hall for early break and the staff-room for lunch.

Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room using staggered breaks etc.

Staff meetings in most instances will be held remotely, but face-to-face meetings may be necessary at various times throughout the school year. Face-to-face meetings will take place in a ventilated space and social distancing will be adhered to and masks will be worn by all staff members.

No hand shaking policy.

Minimise gathering of school staff at the beginning or end of the school day.

Staff can rotate between areas/classes, but this should be minimised where possible.

### **Corridors and Stairwells**

Advice indicates that 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. We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when on the stairs and in the corridors.

### **Ventilation**

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

Windows to be kept open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g., yard times)

Windows to be kept partially open when classrooms are in use.

At the end of each school day, windows are to be fully opened to ventilate room.

Windows to be kept fully open where children are singing in a group

Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors are now installed in nine classrooms. These are monitored regularly by class teachers. If there is a high reading the class will be vacated until levels return to normal.

### **Yard/Supervision**

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. However, we have introduced two yard/break times and pupils will be staggered having breaks/yard time. This will ensure that ‘bubbles’ can play in their own spaces, and not mix with other ‘bubbles’.

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

### **Use of PPE in Schools**

In the case where staff and children cannot maintain a safe 2m distance the use of PPE will occur. PPE e.g. gloves/aprons will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. This might include roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- 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 on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

### **Face Masks**

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

It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members. Medical grade disposable masks and visors are available for all staff members. Masks should be changed regularly and disposed of in the relevant bins.

The National Public Health Emergency team (NPHET) has recommended the wearing of face masks/coverings for all pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. In situations where masks cannot be worn, visors, snoods, or alternative face coverings will suffice.

There are exemptions to the wearing of face coverings:

- Any person with breathing difficulties
- 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.
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated

If you feel that your child falls into one of the above categories (or other), please contact the school and we will do everything possible to work with you and your child.

Mask breaks will be facilitated for children throughout the school day.

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

Information is provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings to all staff.

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

Rules for use of face coverings:

- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.
- Additional disposable face coverings available for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day.
- All staff will be provided with medical grade face masks, to be worn throughout the school premises.

### **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings. 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.

## **4. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities**

### **Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

## Toys

All toys to be cleaned on a regular basis in relevant classes, e.g., Special class, Infant classes. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.

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

Toys used in classrooms are easily cleaned.

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

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

All play equipment should be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned, they should be discarded. This will be monitored by SNAs and class teachers.

Clean toys. d 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.
- Infant classes have been provided with "Dunk Buckets" and cloth bags to clean toys and equipment.

## **Organisation of PE**

PE will continue to take place outdoors and equipment will be cleaned and/or wiped down after each use.

### **Extra-curricular Activities**

After-school activities on the school premises are not permitted at this time – this is to ensure no mixing of ‘Bubbles’.

### **Busy Bees**

Busy Bees will continue to operate for Junior and Senior Infants from 2pm-3pm. ‘Pods’ will be created from the children attending Busy Bees and maintained. All precautions will be taken in relation to cleaning of resources and social distancing of ‘Pods’. Pupils will be brought from their classrooms to the Busy Bees room and back again at 2pm and 3pm respectively using designated exit 3.

### **In school Coaching**

Pupils will continue to benefit from the expertise of external coaches for GAA this year. Pupils will stay in their class ‘Bubbles’ for these activities. All precautions for coaching adhering to Covid-19 will be taken. Further details will follow in relation to other school activities as they arise. Class teacher will be present during coaching sessions.

### **Music Generation**

Tin Whistle tuition for 3rd class will proceed this year in the prefab. Children will be placed in two groups and receive tuition for 30 minutes each. The windows will remain open, and the tutor will adhere to all covid measures currently in place.

### **Art**

Where possible pupils will be assigned their own individual art and equipment supplies.

### **Electronics**

Shared electronic devices are to be sanitised with special wipes after each use.

## **5. Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

Enhanced cleaning practices have been developed throughout the school to deal with Covid-19:

- Extra cleaning of toilet areas and classrooms by cleaner has been organised within the school day as well as at the end of the school day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- New cleaning schedules and checklists adopted to ensure adequate cleaning and placed in each classroom/office.
- School underwent a deep clean prior to re-opening in September 2020/2021
- Staff training in cleaning and hygiene practices
- Pupils received training in cleaning and hygiene practices through SPHE

on return to school

- Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g., at each entrance, in each classroom. In addition to this, portable sanitisers are also available in each classroom for use.
- Hand washing facilities are available in all class toilets, communal toilets and the staffroom.
- Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.
- 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.
- Waste will be collected regularly from classrooms, offices and other areas within the school.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.) in the staffroom.
- Staff to clean their designated area in the staffroom after use.

## **6. 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 St Laurence O’Toole’s N.S. will deal with a suspected case that may arise. A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. An isolation tent has been erected in the school hall. A second isolation tent is available for more than one suspected case.

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 making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times.
- 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.
- The class teacher will 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. The LWR/Principal may also make an assessment especially in relation to members of staff with symptoms.

- Facilitate the pupil presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home. 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 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 parent/guardian to contact 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 principal will inform parents of children in pod of confirmed case as outlined above.

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

- Once the isolation tent is vacated the area will not be reused until the area has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry. Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused. Cleaning will be carried out in line with the school's daily cleaning schedule.
- If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a canteen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant as soon as is practically possible. This will be done in line with the school's daily cleaning schedule.

## **7. 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. 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, 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.

## **8. 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 to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School Plan and the control measures
- Complete the RTW form when they are returning after school closure.
- 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 return to or attend school if they live with someone who has tested positive for Covid 19 or are deemed a close contact.
- If travelling from abroad latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel to be adhered to.
- 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.
- Undergo any Covid-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.

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

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

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

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

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.

## **The Board of Management**

**Recent update:** January 5th, 2022