



## St Patrick's De La Salle B.N.S.

### Covid-19 Response Plan

#### **Introduction:**

As a school community we will do everything possible to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school. If the infection is not introduced, it cannot be spread. However, if it is introduced, we are committed to ensuring that the risk of spreading the virus is minimised.

Our COVID-19 Response Plan has been drawn up in line with Department of Education guidelines and is designed to ensure that all possible control measures are in place in our school to reduce the risk of the introduction/spread of the infection and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors.

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 communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents.

We will review and update this Plan on an ongoing basis to ensure that our control measures are effective and fit for purpose. Prior to the formulation of this plan a risk assessment was carried out with a focus on minimising the risk of the school community being exposed to Covid-19.

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

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

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

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

Signed:

Joe Carty, Principal

Peter Glynn, Chairperson, BOM

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **2. Communications**

2.1 School will keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates.

2.2 This information will be communicated in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required.

2.3 School will contact parents in advance of school re-opening to advise them of procedures in place.

2.4 Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website – <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

## **3. School Layout/Signage**

3.1 The school will reconfigure classrooms and other areas as necessary to support physical distancing in line with Dept. of Education guidance in advance of school reopening.

3.2 Posters and signs (*outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene*) will be displayed throughout the school in strategic locations internally and externally.

3.3 Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures. i.e. by appointment only and as approved by the principal. Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes.

3.4 A Contact Log will be maintained which will record all staff and pupil contacts within the school.

3.5 A risk assessment will be carried out to manage and mitigate risks associated with re-opening.

## **4. COVID-19 Control Measures**

4.1 School will promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms -

- ✓ *high temperature above 38 degrees Celsius,*
- ✓ *cough*

✓ *shortness of breath or breathing difficulties*

✓ *loss of smell or taste or distortion of taste -*

to all Staff, Pupils through training, in school education and posters/signage.

4.2 School will encourage parents to know the symptoms of Covid-19 and refrain from sending their children to school if symptoms are prevalent.

4.3 School will promote awareness of respiratory hygiene to all staff and pupils through training and in school education and posters/signage.

4.4 School will promote awareness of good hand hygiene practices to all staff and pupils, through in school training/ education and posters/signage.

4.5 Hand sanitiser dispensers will be deployed through the school and in classrooms.

4.6 Staff and pupils will be advised to perform hand hygiene:

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

4.7 Use of hand hygiene facilities & wash hand basins will be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use them.

4.8 Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves, will be assisted by an SNA.

4.9 Wearing of gloves by staff or pupils not considered appropriate

4.10 To ensure physical distancing in school can be maintained, school will implement:

*Increasing separation by:*

- Reconfiguring class spaces to maximise physical distancing
- Utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing.

*Decreasing interaction by:*

- Introducing Bubbles & Pods
- Where possible, staff will maintain a minimum of 1m distance between pupils and where possible 2m.
- Measures will be taken to avoid close contact at face to face level

4.11 To promote awareness of physical distancing during school drop off/collection:

- Walking/cycling to school will be encouraged as much as possible.
- Signage will be displayed encouraging a distance of 2m between Parents / Guardians and other Parents / Guardians and also between Parents / Guardians and school staff.
- Pupils will head straight to their small group designated area in the playground or, on wet days to their classroom.
- A plan has been put in place to ensure staggered exit from school at the end of day.

4.12 To ensure physical distancing between staff:

- A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed.

- Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks, break out points etc.
- Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.
- Staff will be advised to wear masks/visors if physical distancing is not possible.

4.13 Physical distancing in school yard:

- Play time/outdoor activities will be adjusted to minimise crowding at the entrance and exits.
- The three school yards will be divided out to facilitate different classroom/bubbles.
- A plan for yard supervision to ensure physical distance has been put in place

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

**5. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities:**

Choir/Music performance and assemblies	Will only take place in a well-ventilated room and if suitable distancing can be observed.
Sports Activities	School will refer to HPSC guidelines
Toys	All toys will be cleaned on a regular basis in accordance with guidelines. All play equipment will be checked and cleaned regularly
Art	Pupils should have own supplies
Electronics / Computers	Shared devices will be cleaned between uses
Music Equipment	Will not be shared
Library	Pupils should have their own books. Shared books will be covered in a wipeable plastic cover. Hand hygiene will have to be performed after each use.
Shared Sports Equipment	Use of equipment sharing will be minimised / cleaned after every use.
Recreation	Two small breaks ( 10:30 - 10:40 and 10:50 - 11:00) and two lunch breaks (12:00 - 12:30 and 12:45 - 13:15) have been organised to reduce by 50% the number of children at play. Increased supervision has been put in place.
Departure at school finish time	A staggered departure of classes has been organised to reduce the congregation of pupils / parents / staff at school finish times (13:30 and 14:30)
Breaks for Staff	Arrangements in place so that staff have normal breaks but at the same time facilitating physical distancing in the staffroom or other wherever breaks are taken

Equipment for Children with Special Educational Needs	Special attention will be given to the cleaning of equipment used by children with Special Educational Needs to ensure that it is visibly cleaned and disinfected.
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## 6. Hygiene & Cleaning

6.1 Contract has been put in place with contract cleaners to ensure that the school is cleaned once a day. Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted

6.2 Full cleaning of school undertaken by contract cleaners before re-opening of school.

6.3 Staff will have access to cleaning products to thoroughly clean & disinfect frequently touched surfaces in classrooms i.e. door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink & toilet facilities.

6.4 Any room, where a suspected case has been present, will be vacated, as soon as practicably possible, and thoroughly cleaned, in accordance with guidelines.

## 7. Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19.

7.1 Staff will follow guidelines as set out by Dept. of Education and HSE.

7.2 Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following outlines how St Patrick's B.N.S. will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work. 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 put in place. The designated isolation area (GP Hall) is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

7.3 If a staff member / pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in St Patrick's B.N.S. 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 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times

Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises

Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home

Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided

If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport will 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.

7.3 Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery. 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 / pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

7.4 Arrangements will be made to thoroughly clean the isolation area after use, in accordance with guidelines.

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

Such circumstances include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of Covid 19 is identified while the school is in operation appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

## **8. Staff Engagement**

8.1 All staff have completed Dept. of Education Induction to ensure that they have full knowledge and understanding of all matters related to Covid 19 i.e. people at risk; symptoms, when to stay at home, how to deal with suspected cases, availability of occupational supports.

8.2 All staff have completed a Return to Work (RTW) form.

8.3 A Lead Worker representative (LWR) and assistant Lead Worker Representative (Asst LWR) have been appointed. The LWR, supported by Asst. LWR will work in collaboration with the school 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.

8.4 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 with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.