



# St. Conleth & Mary's National School

## Covid-19 School Response Plan for Safe Reopening of School

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## Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of our pupils, staff and wider school community are of paramount importance to the Board of Management. As such this document outlines how the school will implement the Roadmap to reopening schools issued by the Department of Education and Skills.

Recognising that advice from the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the HSE and others is likely to change over time, the school will, on a daily basis, check the DES, gov.ie and the CPSMA website for any updates and communicate them to the school community. This communication will simply point out that a particular document has been changed. It will be the responsibility of staff and parents to check the detail of these changes for themselves. Where a change needs to be communicated to the pupils, school management will organise for this to be done through individual class teachers.

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) has detailed guidance around the re-opening of schools. A copy of this advice is available [here](#).

## Control measures

### Key control measures

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 St. Conleth and Mary's. If infection is not introduced, it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions: student-student, staff-staff and staff-student and must be managed in all settings.

**Any staff or pupils of St. Conleth and Mary's that have symptoms of COVID-19 must not attend school. Instead, they should phone their doctor to arrange a Covid-19 test and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.**

**Any staff or pupils of St. Conleth and Mary's should not 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. →

Furthermore, staff and pupils of **St. Conleth and Mary's** are requested 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.

Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school **must** bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. Full guidance on COVID-19 symptoms is available from the HSE but they include:

- fever or 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](#).

### Physical Distancing

Physical distancing can be usefully applied in primary and special school settings allowing for some flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning. Care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times.

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.**

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

### Increasing separation

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, primary schools and special schools should:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing
2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing

To support primary schools and special schools in the implementation of physical distancing in the classroom, the Department has developed a suite of illustrative classroom layouts of potential options (including arrangements for special classes) which are in accordance with the public health advice, and assumes:

- Room is clear of any unnecessary furniture/shelves etc. on the walls
- A variety of classroom sizes.

A link to the suite of illustrative classroom layouts is available [here](#).

A link to illustrative special classes is available [here](#).

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

### Decreasing interaction

It is recommended that a distance of 1m should be maintained between desks or individual pupils in primary schools.



Where possible, workstations are allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces which are shared.

Classes are divided into Pods, there should be at least (1m distance) between individual Pods within the Class. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore, achieving this recommendation in the first four years of primary or special schools, is not a pre-requisite to reopening a primary or special school for all pupils.

The aim of the system within the 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.

Pod sizes should be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context.

To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be always possible.

Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided/minimised where possible.

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

**Additional measures to decrease interaction include:**

- Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) are discouraged.
- Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource.
- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Encourage pupils 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.

## Ventilation

Good ventilation in classrooms and other spaces is critical to limiting the spread of Covid-19. In terms of maximising the ventilation, the following needs to be considered:

- Can room ventilation especially in classrooms be improved without causing discomfort.
- The opening of doors and windows should be encouraged to increase natural ventilation.
- Increasing air flow and ventilation weather permitting.

**In particular:**

- windows should be opened as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g., during break-times or lunchtimes (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use.
- Rooms should be well ventilated before occupancy each day. This can be achieved by ensuring that at the end of the school day each evening, the windows in each room should be opened (as wide as practical and safe while also considering security issues) for at least 15 minutes to ventilate the room fully.
- Windows should also be open at break times and at lunchtimes for at least 15 minutes where possible.
- Achieving fresh air via a number of windows being partially opened as required rather than one window fully open can help to maximise the use of window driven natural ventilation distribution across the room without causing discomfort.



- In colder weather any local chilling effect can be offset by partially opening the windows nearest and above the radiators.
- Make sure that air movement is not blocked by furniture or window blinds and curtains.
- Rooms with adequate fresh air should not be stuffy or have condensation on the window glass.

**Updated guidance on ventilation in schools is available [here](#).**

## Prior to school reopening

### Staff

#### Staff duties

Staff 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 their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties within the school. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reducing 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 (see **Appendix 2 to [COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools](#)**) 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.



## COVID-19 Induction Training

All staff of St. Conleth & Mary's 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
- 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; this will be communicated via email.

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 his role by the Board of Management.

### Procedure for returning to work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace from 1 March 2021, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form (see [Appendix 2 to COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools](#)) which will be available as a Google Form or from the principal. An RTW form should be completed and returned 3 days before returning to work.

**Staff will be required 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.

Prior to the school reopening for pupils, the Principal will check that each staff member has reviewed the training materials provided by the DES.

### Staff members at very high risk

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to work in the school buildings. 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.

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 RTW form issued to staff will include a question pertaining to whether or not the staff member identifies with one of the above-named categories. If a staff member identifies themselves within one of the above named categories they will be contacted by the Principal and DES procedures will be followed as outlined in circular [49/2020](#) Information note 001/2021 and Information Note 002/2021.

**Please note also Department of Education Information Notes TC [0010/2021](#) & TC [0011/2021](#) regarding Full Re-Opening of Primary Schools Arrangements Teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) n employed in recognised Primary Schools.**

### COVID-19 Tracker App

All staff of St. Conleth and Mary's are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist public health with contact tracing both in and out of the school.

The 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.

The free app can be downloaded from Apple's AppStore or Google Play store.

### Parents

All parents/guardians will be provided with the following via the school app and website:

- a copy of the school's Covid-19 School Response Plan for Safe Reopening of School
- a video outlining procedures and protocols for school reopening
- a video on correct procedures for hand hygiene to watch with their child(ren)
- A declaration form (see [here](#)) to complete in respect of pupils returning to school after a school closure or an absence.

**Parents are requested not to congregate outside the entrance to the school** when either bringing their children to school or collecting their children from school. If they need to communicate with school staff, this should be done via email or telephone.

**Parents/guardians can contact the school raising questions or concerns regarding Covid-19 via email to: [BOM@stconlethandmarys.ie](mailto:BOM@stconlethandmarys.ie).**

**It is appreciated school closures have posed challenges for parents. In this context, the Department of Education has published a range of wellbeing resources for parents – see [here](#).**

### Pupils

Prior to returning to school pupils should:

- have all personal belongings clearly labelled.
- watch school video outlining procedures and protocol for school reopening.
- watch video on correct procedures for hand hygiene.



- have a small bag prepared containing hand sanitiser, tissues, and a face mask.

## Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

A Lead Worker Representative will be appointed from the staff of St. Conleth & Mary's. The Lead Worker Representative will work in collaboration with the School Management to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19, to monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

In summary, the role of the Lead Worker Representative 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 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,
- 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.

**Our school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative and one Assistant Lead Worker Representative.**

**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.

**LWR: Una Walsh**

**Contact:**

**Ass. LWR: Róisín Byrne**

**Contact:**

**All staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.**



### 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

### Selection of Lead Worker Representative/Assistant LWR

The staff of St. Conleth & Mary's will select staff members for the LWR and Assistant LWR positions as appropriate. The 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, Assistant LWR would be selected from the non-teaching staff where feasible and vice versa.

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR/Assistant LWR as appropriate will 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 will vote to select the LWR/Assistant LWR.

The LWR/Assistant LWR will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the Board of Management. The 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.

### Supports for the Lead Worker Representative / 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, and
- 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.



### 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) of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the BoM. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

## Entering the school building

### Staff

All staff members are required to sign in when entering the building. The sign in/out is done via Google Forms.

Face coverings must be worn at all times.

All staff members are required to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser upon entering the building

All staff must observe social distancing.

### Parents

Parental admission to the school building will be either by pre-arranged appointment or contact from the school to collect their child. Appointments can be made by contacting the school office at 045-431179.

Parents who enter the school building are required to complete the sign in/out via Google Form or the hard copy located beside the main entrance providing name and a contact number. They are also required to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.

### Pupils

Upon entering the school grounds pupils must proceed to their classroom.. The 'school gates' will open at 8.50 to allow entry to classrooms.

Pupils must proceed to their classroom immediately. A hand sanitiser is available at the entrance to all classrooms and must be used before entering the classroom. Pupils must take their seat in their classroom. Pupils must use the seat and desk allocated to them by their teacher. Coats are to be placed on the back of pupil's chairs and school bags under their tables.

### Visitors

It is appreciated that necessary visitors such as contractors will need to enter the school from time to time. Such visitors will need to have obtained prior approval from the Principal and they will also have to sign in and sign out and, on entering the building, perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser. There is a sign near the entrance door to the school advising visitors of this requirement.

## During the school day

Use of school library will not be permitted. Assemblies will not take place for the foreseeable future.

Children's coats must be kept on the back of their chairs and school bags placed under tables.

During break times or times when the class are out of their classroom windows will be opened to



### ventilate the room.

Teachers are responsible for the sanitising of their own workspaces and will be provided with cleaning products to do so. These products must be kept away from children for example in a locked press or on a high shelf out of reach.

Nobody is allowed in the secretary's office during the day and children are not to be sent to the office or around the school. Teachers are responsible for their own photocopying which must be done before or after school. Teachers must wipe down the photocopier after use. There should be a maximum of 2 people in the office at any one time.

Children cannot bring a message from one classroom to another.

Children in rooms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 are to use toilets in the toilet block. A different cubicle will be assigned to each classroom and only this cubicle may be used.

When going to toilet blocks children must walk on the left of the corridor, this will be clearly marked.

Children are not to move unnecessarily around the school. For example they should not be sent to the school office.

Teachers must have emergency packs for 3 days prepared and in their classroom.

## Special Education 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 pupils 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).

### 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.



## Pupils Returning to school following an absence

All parents/guardians are required to complete **'Return to school declaration form'** prior to a pupil returning to school following any absence. This can be completed via the school app, is available in hard copy from the school or can be emailed upon request.

## Exiting the school building

### Staff

All staff members are required to sign out when exiting the school building. The sign in/out is done via Google form.

### Parents

Parents who exit the school building are required to complete the sign in/out using a google form.

### Pupils

Pupils will exit the building in stages. Pupils will use the front door & library door to exit the building.

Time	Front Door	Library
2.44pm	Rm 1 & 2 & 17 & 20	Rm 6 & 7 & 21
2.47pm	Rm 3 & 4	Rm 5 & 8
2.50pm	Rm 15 & 16	Rm 13 & 14



## Physical alterations to the school building

### Classrooms

All our classrooms have been altered to ensure a full return to school in line with the DES roadmap / guidelines for the reopening schools.

Pupils will be seated in pods of 4 to 8 children. Pupils will remain in these pods. While pupils are not 1 meter apart within their pods they are 1 metre away from the next pod, this is in line with published Department of Education and Skills classroom layouts for the reopening of schools in the context of Covid-19.

Excess furniture has been removed from classrooms to ensure a full return to school is possible.

### Signage

A range of signs covering good cough & sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene, social distancing and recognising the signs of COVID-19 will be appropriately displayed. Signs will be placed around the school building and at wash/sanitising points.

### Hand Sanitiser

Hand sanitiser is available at all entry points and in classrooms.

### Yards

Yards have been divided to maintain class bubbles at break times. The yards have been divided into 8 sections and each class group has its own section.

## Break Times

### Staff

Yard times have been changed and there are now two of each break. Time has been allocated to teachers for their breaks with supervision in place from neighbouring teacher. Each Group contains 10 teachers who will each be responsible for yard duty with 3 teachers on yard duty at each break. This means that each teacher will be supervising the yard for 3 breaks every week.

**The yards have been broken into 8 sections.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> class yard** = 2 sections with 1 teacher supervising

**3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> yard** = 3 sections with 1 teacher supervising

**5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> yard** = 3 sections with 1 teacher supervising

#### Small Break Group 1

11am – 11.15am (supervising teachers break from 10.40 – 10.55)

#### Small Break group 2

11.20am – 11.35am (supervising teachers break from 11 – 11.15)

#### Big Break Group 1

12.45pm – 1.10pm (supervising teachers break from 12.20pm – 12.40pm)

**Big Break Group 2:** 1.15pm – 1.40pm (supervising teachers break from 12.50pm – 1.10pm)

Teachers will have their phones with them in the staffroom and will be contacted by the supervising teacher if they are needed in case of emergency.

### SNA breaks

**Small break:** 10.25 – 10.40

**Lunch:** 11.55 – 12.20



### Using the staffroom

Two areas have been designated for staff breaks the main staffroom and the library.

No more than 10 people should be in the staffroom at any one time and no more than 4 people in the library. Social distancing is to be observed. Table layouts are not to be altered. Please bring any cutlery, cups, plates, etc., that you may need. Tea, coffee, milk and sugar are provided.

The fridge, toaster and microwave are available for staff use. However please be aware that the fridge will be completely emptied at the end of each day with any remaining food items/containers disposed of. The dishwasher will not be in use.

### Pupils

Breaks will be staggered. Each class will have a designated section of the yard to play in and will be supervised by a teacher. No food to be brought out onto the yard.

## Curriculum

The initial settling back period, following a school closure, will be especially significant for revisiting, consolidating and, in some cases, relearning curriculum content previously worked on either prior to the school closure period or as part of distance learning. It will be important to reinforce and consolidate pupils' learning from their previous class. Teachers might find it useful to work with the curriculum content, objectives and learning outcomes for the previous class level for at least the month of September in order to ensure that pupils are ready to commence new learning.

It will be necessary to prioritise certain aspects of the curriculum when the new term begins. The School will need to re-orientate its curricular work especially during the initial weeks of the first term so as to give greater time and attention to areas such as Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE), Language and Mathematics. Gradually, as we build a comprehensive picture of where pupils are in their learning, it will be possible to work towards more 'typical' curriculum plans.

SPHE and PE will be important in supporting pupils' wellbeing while language and Mathematics will be central in supporting pupils' overall learning. Mandatory aspects of SPHE such as *Stay Safe* and *Relationships and Sexuality Education* (RSE) should be taught early in the year. Pupils should also continue to have experiences in *Social, Environmental and Scientific Education* (SESE) and the *Arts*; the use of cross curricular or thematic approaches may be particularly useful in this regard.

### Physical Education

Physical Education supports the development of skills and attributes such as physical movement and development, communication, self-esteem and confidence, all of which are particularly important as pupils return to school. Pupils will have had varying opportunities for movement and physical activity over the past months. As the new school year gets underway, movement and activity through timetabled PE lessons (30 mins 3 times per week), along with activity throughout the day, will contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing.

**The use of 'pods', the need for physical distancing, the cleaning and organisation of equipment, and the individual school environment will shape the PE learning experiences in the new school year.**

### Social Personal Health Education

The wider physical, mental, emotional and relationship implications of social distancing, lockdown





and possibly bereavement may be significant for some pupils. There should therefore be a focus on wellbeing as a foundation for learning. Teachers will play an important role in supporting positive interactions and routines for the pupils and in encouraging healthy behaviours as the pupils make sense of their new realities and come to feel safe and secure in their school surroundings. As such, every **class will be taught** one formal SPHE lesson per week at a set time while also engaging in many discrete well-being activities during the day.

SPHE is particularly important in responding to how Covid-19 has impacted on children in terms of their feelings, thoughts and behaviours. Learning experiences that support children to focus on their strengths, positive attributes and qualities to enable reconnection with the school community will assist in easing the transition back to school. SPHE curriculum content will also be useful in providing general and specific support to pupils who are finding the transition back to school difficult. While teachers will be best placed to consider what aspects of their SPHE programme should be prioritised or revisited in light of the particular context of their class or pupils, it may be pertinent to focus on some of the following Strand Units:

- Self-identity
- Taking care of my body
- Growing and changing
- Safety and protection
- My friends and my family
- Developing citizenship

**Particular attention will be given to:**

- The importance of **personal hygiene** and how to wash hands thoroughly, coughing/sneezing according to the medical guidance, and how and when to wear face coverings/masks.
- Supporting pupils in **managing their feelings, resolving conflicts** and coping with uncertainty, as well as new situations brought about by Covid-19 such as loss of a loved one.
- Revisiting the **Stay Safe Programme** or **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**.
- Allowing pupils adequate time to re-connect with one another and to (re)establish relationships with peers. **Co-operative games** and the incorporation of drama activities such as **role play** and **improvisation** can support this process.
- Providing children with opportunities to talk about and make sense of their experiences.

## Supporting pupils at “very high risk” to COVID-19

There may be some pupils for whom return to St. Conleth and Mary's on **September 1<sup>st</sup>** may not be appropriate because the relevant public health guidelines indicate they are at “very high risk”.

Overall responsibility for ensuring that such pupils receive appropriate support to engage adequately with learning remains with our school. St. Conleth & Mary's will provide regular and ongoing communication between school and home to support these pupils' engagement with their learning and their continuous connection with their classmates and the school community.

Additional supports will be provided for these pupils from within the staffing resources of the school. It may also be possible to utilise support from teachers who are assessed as ‘very high risk’ and who are available to work from home. St. Conleth & Mary's will have discretion to manage and redistribute their support resources in order to best meet the learning needs of our pupils, including pupils at ‘very high risk’ to COVID-19.

Under the direction of the school principal the relevant support teacher should:

- Liaise with the relevant class teacher and Special Education Teacher (SET) where



relevant regarding curricular content and classwork.

- Access relevant learning resources including those produced by the class teacher as well as other externally produced resources.
- Provide the pupil with individualised support for his/her learning; this may include devising an individual support plan for the pupil in cooperation with the class teacher and, where relevant, the SET.
- Increase the pupil's autonomy, motivation, agency and wellbeing.
- Improve the pupil's capacity to become a self-directed learner.
- Support the development of the pupil's digital competence where necessary.
- Avail of the communication / learning platform used by our school (**Seesaw**) to ensure ongoing contact between the pupil and our school and to facilitate some engagement with his/her class teacher and classmates.

Teachers will place a copy of their work plan for the upcoming fortnight on the school website.

## Cleaning

### Enhanced Cleaning

Additional cleaning hours have been secured with Hannigan cleaning (increase from 20 hours per week to 30 hours per week). In addition, extra cleaning hours have been made available to caretaking staff during the day for the regular cleaning of common touch areas.

Every reasonable effort is made to ensure that the school is cleaned in accordance with the guidance/checklist provided in Para 7 and Appendix 9 of [COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools](#).

### 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. Bins will be emptied at the end of the school day.

It is also important to avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth – as these are

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

### Hand Hygiene

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

**Follow the HSE guidelines on how to wash your hands [here](#).**

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean). It is important, however, to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

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.

Hand sanitiser dispensers are at exit and entry points of school and classrooms and care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risks of falls.

**Warm water is available at all sinks.**

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all



toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas.

Hand washing facilities are maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels will be checked twice daily.

Hot air dryers are an acceptable alternative for hand drying but must be regularly maintained. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19. Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing are placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.

Hand sanitiser is suitable to use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

### 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
- After touching potentially contaminated surfaces
- when their hands are physically dirty
- when they cough or sneeze

Furthermore, as a general rule, hand hygiene should be performed when entering and exiting vehicle or buildings.

## Use of shared equipment and resources

### Toys

- All toys will be cleaned on a regular basis. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.
- Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.
- If cloth or soft toys are used, they should be machine washable.
- Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils or 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.
- 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 (electronic or wind-up toys) 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/equipment 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

Pupils will have their own individual art and equipment supplies. Each child will have their own art pack (in a zip lock bag) containing scissors, glue sticks, colours, paint brushes and other items of stationary) All children's stationary must be labelled.

### Writing materials

Pupils will leave a pencil case containing all necessary equipment in the classroom. This must remain in school.

### Electronics

Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards will be sanitised between use.

### 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

School library is closed, and classroom libraries have been removed. Children should bring their own schoolbooks from home for Drop Everything and Read.

### Shared Sports Equipment

Shared sports equipment must be signed out in the logbook prior to use. Where possible children should not share equipment. Where this is not possible children should practice good hand hygiene and equipment should be cleaned between uses. The equipment must be cleaned before being returned to the general store. The logbook will record the completion of this action.

### Maths Equipment

Shared maths equipment must be signed out in the logbook prior to use. Where possible children should not share equipment. Where this is not possible children should practice good hand hygiene and equipment should be cleaned between uses. The equipment must be cleaned before being returned to the general store. The logbook will record the completion of this action.

## Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will need to be used at 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.
- Parent Teacher meetings

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.

**In line with guidelines (Ministerial letter 07/08/2020) Primary school staff must wear face coverings where a distance of 2m cannot be maintained.**

Staff will also be offered a Perspex screen for desks.

For reopening of special education all staff involved are required to wear face visor and surgical grade face coverings.

### Face Coverings/Face Visors/Masks

Cloth 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. Cloth 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.

In childcare and educational settings, the implementation of mandatory face-covering usage is challenging, as it is known that children will have a lower tolerance and ability to use the face covering properly and use of face-coverings by teachers and staff caring for very young children may cause undue stress to the children.

It is not recommended that children attending primary school wear face-coverings.

**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.**

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

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:

- Primary school children.
- Any person with difficulty breathing.
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated.
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance.
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

All staff wearing face coverings are reminded not to 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 regarding the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings is available at:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6ZqdpLfSqw>

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.

Whilst staff may wish to utilise their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, the school will have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings, or if appropriate face visors, for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

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

Masks and visors should be donned and doffed and disposed of as demonstrated in videos available [here](#).



### Medical Grade Masks

The school will provide medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and teachers.

### 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.

Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

### Aprons

The use 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.

## Protocol in the event of a staff member or pupil displaying symptoms of COVID-19

**The Principal, Bryan Lynch, is the designated contact person for ensuring that all aspects of this protocol are adhered to.**

**A checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19 is available in Appendix 7 of [COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools](#)**

### Staff

- If a staff member develops symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever or shortness of breath or sudden loss of taste or smell, they should go home without delay and contact their GP by telephone.
- They should remain 2 metres away from others if possible.
- They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin.
- If tissues are not available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- If they can tolerate doing so and one is available, they should wear a clean cloth face covering or a surgical mask.
- If they must remain in the school, then they should do so in an office or other area away from others mindful of the need to observe good respiratory and hand hygiene.
- If they need to use toilet facilities, they should wipe contact surfaces (for example taps) clean and clean their hands after using the toilet.

### Pupil

If a pupil develops any symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever, shortness of breath or sudden loss of taste or smell while in the care of the school, the following should be observed:

- A staff member will need to take them to the place that is planned for isolation. This will be **Rm 10**.
- Their parent or guardian must be contacted and asked to collect their child as soon as possible.
- Remember the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so the physical separation is enough to reduce risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room.



- If a distance of 2m cannot be maintained, then a staff member caring for a child waiting for pick-up should wear a cloth face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin.
- The staff member should be aware that it is essential to avoid touching their own nose, mouth or eyes while caring for a symptomatic child and to perform hand hygiene.
- If a member of staff has helped someone with symptoms they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves or unless they are subsequently advised to do so by public health personnel.

## Supporting teaching and learning in the home where there is localised full school closure

In the event of a full school closure, **Seesaw** will be the platform used to continue teaching and learning. Seesaw codes will be provided to the pupils on their return to school. Where a child does not return to school the Seesaw codes will be posted to their home address. **The school will also engage in weekly wellbeing check ins with pupils via zoom.**

## Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective selfcare. 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 freephone 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 Department of Education has updated its wellbeing resources for school staff – see [here](#).**