**Covid -19 Response Plan**

**SN Muire, Rampark 2021**

**Introduction**

The Minister for Education published “*The Roadmap for the Full Return to School*” on the 27th July. It sets out what the operation of schools will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context.

This COVID-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in SN Muire

It has been developed in line with public health advice issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and in compliance with the “Return to Work Safely Protocols” developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). This document sets out the information that SN Muire need to implement a School COVID-19 Response Plan, including a COVID-19 policy, lead worker representative and process to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19.

It provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, pupils, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of education for the health and wellbeing of pupils and society as a whole.

This document focuses on the practical steps which are being taken in SN Muire to minimise the risk of the introduction of infection into our school while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time. The documentation is supported by the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities. [That report is available here.](https://assets.gov.ie/78748/8796d60e-790e-4007-add1-de18e509a3c1.pdf)

One of the key challenges is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning. This document identifies the steps SN Muire will take to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 virus.

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 plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to pupils, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable reopening of school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the pupils in the school. The COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice as appropriate for primary and special schools.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and sustainable return to work, and reopening of schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the BOM, staff, pupils and parents.

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

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

**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. The policy will be signed and dated by the chairperson and principal of the BOM and brought to the attention of the staff, pupils, parents and others.

**Planning and Preparing for Return to school**

The BOM of SN Muire 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.

Before reopening schools for the 2020/21 school year each school will need to have processes 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;
* 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
* 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 if necessary 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.

There are checklists in place to assist the school on the details of what is needed for these arrangements in the Appendices of this plan.

**Induction Training**

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

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

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

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

**Procedure for Returning to Work**

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available online or from the principal. A copy is attached at ***Appendix 1***

A RTW form should be completed and returned **3 days** before returning to work.

The principal will also provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member’s return to the school facility.

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

[**People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):**](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html)

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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/cancer-patients.html)
* 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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/asthma.html), pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and [severe COPD](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/copd.html)
* 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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/weak-immune-system.html) (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.

This section sets out how the provisions will operate in schools. The process for appointment of the lead worker representative in schools has been agreed centrally between the Department of Education and the education partners.

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and school management.

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

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, 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 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.

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

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

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| --- | --- |
| ***Name(s) of lead worker representative:*** | ***Contact details:*** |
| Bernadette O Connor | 042 9376296 |

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.

Full details of the arrangements which will apply for the LWR in SN Muire is set out at ***Appendix 2.***

**Signage**

SN Muire will display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

Additional signage will be displayed to support introduction of new drop off and collection procedures, advice to parents on social distancing on school grounds and to support pupils in return to school.

**Making 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. The school will reconfigure classrooms and other areas as necessary to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening. (**see Physical Distancing)**

**Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A completed risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 is attached at ***Appendix 3.***

 Any changes to the school's existing emergency procedures that arise as a result of the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences will be documented and incorporated into the school’s safety statement. Also, any new risks that arise due to the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan and changes to the school’s current risk assessments will be documented and incorporated into the school safety statement.

**First Aid/Emergency Procedure**

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in SN Muire. 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.

**Access to School and school Contact Log**

Access to SN Muire will be in line with agreed school procedures i.e making of appointment. Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors, parents and DES Inspectorate will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. All visitors entering school facilities will be required to complete a detailed sign in/sign out log. Parents collecting pupils during school hours will be required to complete a sign in/sign out log also.

Parents wishing to drop off forgotten items will use box provided outside front door of school.

SN Muire will 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. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with each school in their role as data controller.

**Control measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in**

 **SN Muire**

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-student and must be managed in all settings.

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.

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

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

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

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms

* Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
* Advise staff and pupils not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
* Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
* Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
* Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
* Visitors to the school during the day shouldbe by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point;
* Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.
* Parents must adhere to one-way system during drop off and pick up times

**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

**Respiratory Hygiene**

SN Muire will encourage good respiratory hygiene through the following advice

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.

**Hand Hygiene**

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. SN Muire will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean). Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins will be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

 Hand sanitiser dispensers will be deployed at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms and care will be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risks of falls.

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all toilets, classrooms and kitchen.

Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of emulsifying soap and towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities

**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.

Children will be encouraged to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth as hands once contaminated can transfer the virus to eyes, nose and mouth.

Pupils will be reminded of necessity for good hand and respiratory hygiene on a daily basis.

**Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. However, it is important that the necessity for social distancing does not become counterproductive and create anxiety among young children. 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, SN Muire will

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing ensuring rooms are clear of any unnecessary furniture etc.
2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing

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

***Decreasing interaction***

 A distance of 1m should be maintained between desks or between individual pupils. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors, therefore physical distancing will not be a requirement from Jun. Infans-2nd class

 In SN Muire classroom groupings will be structured into Bubbles, and within each Bubble discrete groups or Pods of 4 pupils will be created from those children seated at same tables to decrease the risk of infection. There will be a distance of 1m between individual Pods within a class Bubble whenever possible. The objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities as much as possible and to ensure as much as possible that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival to departure.

Different Class Bubbles where possible have separate breaks times and separate areas at break times. (***Appendix*** Outline of School day)

Classroom resources shared between Bubbles will be cleaned frequently.

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

***Additional measures to decrease interaction include:***

Interaction will be limited on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas. (***Appendix*** Outline of School Day)

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 will 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.

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

***School drop off/collection***

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting pupils will be arranged to encourage physical distancing of 2m and discourage congregation of parents. ***(Appendix*** Outline of school Day)

A one-way system will be introduced for drop off/collection using 2 entry points: St. Pat’s gate and Pedestrian gate and one exit point: Main gate

Staggered drop off/ pick up times will be implemented. ***(Appendix*** Outline of School Day)

Walking/cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible.

Arrangements will be made to maintain a distance of 2m between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff.

On arrival, children will go straight to classrooms through designated entry door.

***Staff***

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

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

Hand shaking is not permitted.

Gathering of school staff at the beginning or end of the school day should be minimised.

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

***Kitchen***

Ensure physical distancing is applied in kitchen facilities

Staff are encouraged to have and be responsible for their own utensils as far as possible.

***Corridors and Stairwells***

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

***Yard/Supervision***

Staggered break times will minimise crowding at entry and exit points.

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

Sharing of equipment will not be encouraged but where it happens, equipment will be regularly cleaned.

Maintaining social distance while playing outside may not always be possible or beneficial to the mental wellbeing of children, but will be encouraged.

**Use of PPE in Schools**

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

**Masks**

Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

* Has trouble breathing;
* Is unconscious or incapacitated;
* Is unable to remove it without help;
* Has special needs to who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering.

For staff, face coverings should not be required if physical distancing is possible and practiced appropriately. Wearing a face covering will conceal facial expression and make communication difficult.

The use of a visor as an alternative will be considered where there is a concern regarding prolonged close contact and exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets. All Members of staff will be provided with a visor and masks to be used at their discretion.

**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. All staff will be provided with gloves to use at their discretion.

**Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities**

*Choir/Music Performance*

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration will be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

*Sport Activities*

SN Muire will refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

*Shared Equipment*

Toys

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

Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids will be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal. All play equipment will be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If it cannot be repaired or cleaned, they should be discarded.

Clean toys and equipment will be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard.

Soft modelling materials and play dough where used will be for individual use only.

Cleaning Procedure for Toys

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

Art – Pupils will be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies where possible.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards will be cleaned between use and consideration could be given to the use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning. Each classroom will be provided with disinfectant wipes to facilitate cleaning.

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

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

Shared Sports Equipment – sharing will be minimised and shared equipment will be cleaned between uses by different people.

**Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice doc ‘COVID-19 Interim Recommendations for the reopening of schools and Educational Facilities’ This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected cases of COVID-19

SN Muire will be cleaned at **least once per day**. (***Appendix*** Cleaning Schedule of SN Muire). Fog misting disinfectant will be carried out twice per week to provide additional cleaning to frequently touched areas.

All staff will have access to cleaning products (household detergent, bleach, anti-viral spray, blue roll) 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 will thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Daily collection of used waste disposal bags from classrooms and other areas within the school facility will take place

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

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

* The room will be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.
* Once the room is vacated the room will not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry. Disinfecting only works where surface is clean.
* Person assigned to cleaning will avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and will wear household gloves and a plastic apron.
* The environment and furniture will be cleaned using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).
* Special attention will be paid to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
* Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.
* If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas will be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

**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 SN Muire will deal with a suspected case that may arise.

**Classroom** **4** is the designated isolation area identified within the school. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 has been considered and the **PE storeroom** is the contingency isolation area for dealing with an additional case.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at SN Muire the following are the procedures to be implemented:

* If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
* Staff member will put on appropriate PPE and accompany individual directly to isolation area advising them not to touch any surfaces while making sure they maintain a distance of at least 2m from person presenting with symptoms.
* A mask will be provided 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;
* Staff member 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 person presenting with symptoms will be facilitated in remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and they will be facilitated in 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, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and they will be advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
* If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect;
* An assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
* Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

**Special Educational Needs**

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

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

Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

Special Education Teachers (SET) will wipe down all surfaces between each session in SET room. Different resources will be used for each group. Pupils will use hand sanitiser before entering and on leaving SET room.

*Hand hygiene*

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

*Equipment*

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers’ instructions.

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

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

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

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

 **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.

**Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Board of Management of SN Muire aims to support the health and well being of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside work. The Board is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the COVID-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for and disruption to people’s personal, family and social lives.

The Board aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing.  Support for school staff wellbeing is provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE’s Health Promotion Team. An [Occupational Health Strategy](https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Information/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’.*

Under the EAS, employees have 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.  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. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

Ratified at Board of Management Meeting on 6th August 2020.

Reviewed and updated by Principal & Deputy Principal on 19th August 2021

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Julie Carolan­­­­­ Karen Fealy­­