



**Gaelscoil na Dúglaise**

**Dúglas,**

**Corcaigh**

**T12D702**

**Uimhir Rolla: 19882S**

**Covid-19 School Response Plan**

**Lúnasa 2021**

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

## Clár

1. Réamhrá	2
2. Gaelscoil na Dúglaise COVID-19 Policy	4
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School	5
3. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)	7
4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative	8
5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment	8
6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus	9
7. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19	9
8. Control Measures	11
9. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19	13
10. Staff Duties	14
11. Covid related absence management	15
12. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme	15

## 1. Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Gaelscoil na Dúglaise.

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

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. **COVID-19 School Policy**
2. **Planning and Preparing for Return to School**
  - a. **School Building**
  - b. **Signage**
3. **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
4. **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
5. **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
6. **General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
  - a. **Wash your Hands Frequently**
  - b. **Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser**
  - c. **Avoid Touching your Eyes, Nose and Mouth**
  - d. **Physical Distancing**
  - e. **Practice Respiratory Hygiene**
  - f. **Do**
  - g. **Do Not**
  - h. **People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)**
7. **Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19**
8. **Control Measures**
  - a. **Return to Work Form**
  - b. **Induction Training**
  - c. **Induction Training – On-line Video**
  - d. **Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**
  - e. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  - f. **Wearing of Gloves**
  - g. **Cleaning**
  - h. **Ventilation**
  - i. **Access to the School Building / Contact Log**
  - j. **First Aid / Emergency Procedure**
9. **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
10. **Staff Duties**

**11. Covid related absence management**

**12. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

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

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

**1. Gaelscoil na Dúglaise COVID-19 Policy**

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus.

The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

## **COVID-19 Policy Statement**

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

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

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

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Cathaoirleach). Date: 19<sup>ú</sup> Lúnasa 2020.

## 2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

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

### *a. School Buildings*

Before re-opening schools in the new school year schools are reminded 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

### *b. Signage*

Schools will be required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The following is a link to the dedicated area of the Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC) website where there are several posters, including those appropriate for primary school pupils, located. Irish versions are also available here.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/> We have downloaded the posters and they are displayed in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

## **Impact of COVID-19 on School Policies and Activities**

### **School uniform**

No issues from a public perspective have been raised regarding children wearing school uniforms by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC). That said, pupils in Gaelscoil na Dúglaise can alternate between wearing the formal school uniform and the school PE uniform each day.

### **School requisites and equipment**

The importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette continues to be a major focus in the school.

- In so far as possible, all pupils should bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case or 'ziplock' bag (labelled with their name) to avoid the sharing of equipment. All items should have the child's name (or a mark) on them for ease of identification.
- Pupils should leave their pencil case and stationery in school each afternoon and have a second set of stationery at home if needed to complete homework.
- By necessity, some classroom equipment is shared between classes including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products takes place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.
- Book Rental procedures have been revised in accordance with safe hygiene practices. Additional book rental texts have also been purchased.

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

### **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing 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 is taken by teachers 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 1 metre distance from pupils and other staff members, and 2 metres where possible. Staff members should also take measures to avoid close contact at face-to-face levels with pupils and other staff members. Physical distancing falls into two categories:

#### **Increasing separation**

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom the school has:

1. Reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing.
2. Utilised and reconfigured all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing.

The teacher's desk should be at least 1 metre, and where possible 2 metres, away from pupil desks.

**Decreasing interaction** Classrooms have been reconfigured to comply with physical distancing as per DES guidelines i.e. 1 metre distance between pupils in classes from Third to Sixth Classes where possible.

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore, achieving this recommendation in the first four years of primary school is not a pre-requisite.

Where possible workstations will be allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces which are shared. Each class is its own (Bolgán) "Class Bubble" (i.e., a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups (faihneoga) or "Pods" within those class bubbles have been created to the extent that this is practical. The objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class 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 will 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 will consistently be in the same Class Bubbles, although this will not be always possible. Breaktimes are staggered and each Class Bubble will have their own yard area.

Sharing educational material between Pods will be avoided/minimised where possible. Staff members moving from Class Bubbles to Class Bubbles will be limited as much as possible.

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

Limiting interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas. Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) is discouraged. Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (e.g., access to a shared resource), it will be organised to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource. Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items. Pupils will be encouraged to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth). Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device will be cleaned regularly, and hand hygiene implemented.

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

School drop off/collection Pupils and staff are encouraged to walk or cycle to school as much as possible.

#### **Arrival at school**

The school gates will open as normal at 8.30 a.m. each morning. All pupils will go straight into their classrooms when they arrive at school (as they did previously on wet mornings). This will ensure a 'flow' of people through the school grounds at assembly time and avoid congregation of pupils and parents/guardians on the school grounds. 2 metres distance should be maintained between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff.

Pupils will be supervised in their classrooms by the ISM and SNAs. Classes will begin at the normal time of 8.50 a.m. for Junior Infants to Sixth Classes.

#### **Breaktimes**

Staggered breaktimes will operate in the school as follows:

**Am Sosa** Ranganna Naíonán -Rang 2 10.35-10.45rn. Ranganna 3-6 10.50-11.00rn

**Am Lóin** Ranganna Naíonán -Rang 2 12.15-12.35in. Ranganna 3-6 12.40-1.00in.

All pupils will still get the same amount of play/yard time as previously, given the importance of fresh air and exercise and the need to ventilate classrooms during the school day. Teachers will also endeavour as often as possible to use the school environment as an outdoor classroom.

Each mainstream class will be assigned their own yard area to maintain the integrity of Class Bubbles. Appropriate levels of supervision of children will be provided during breaktimes.

#### **Am dul abhaile**

2 metres distance should be maintained between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff at Am dul abhaile.

As per DES guidelines for parents at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/5572b-back-to-school-advice-for-parents-students-and-families/> parents must drop and collect children quickly and not linger on the school grounds. Am dul abhaile for Naíonán Bheaga will be 1.30i.n. and the exit point will be the pedestrian gate. ▪ Am dul abhaile for Naíonán Mhóra will also be at 1.30 i.n. The exit point will be the main gate. Am dul abhaile for Ranganna 2-6 will remain at 2.30 p.m. ▪ Am dul abhaile for Rang 1 will be 2.35 p.m. (instead of 2.30 p.m.) and the children will be requested to use different exit gates. The rationale for allowing pupils from Ranganna 2-6 to be dismissed before pupils in Rang 1 is that they are better able to vacate the school grounds quickly and to allow older pupils to collect younger siblings at 2.30 p.m. which will again assist in minimising the congregation of parents/guardians at Am dul abhaile.

2 metres is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching, such as when they are in the staff room and arriving to work. If 2 metres cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much distance as is possible and the updated guidance on wearing of face coverings should be observed. Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. No hand shaking should take place in the school. Staff must minimise gatherings at the beginning and the end of each school day. Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room. The reconfiguration of the staff room and the courtyard and the implementation of staggered break times will assist in this regard. Staff should be cognisant of the seating configurations that they avail of at breaktimes. Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.). Staff must use antibacterial wipes to wipe down the chair and table area that they have used during break time before they leave the staff room area.

#### **Corridors and Stairwell**

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. Staff and pupils should keep to the left when walking in corridors and on the stairs.

#### **Yard/Supervision**

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary school play together outdoors, however, break times have been staggered to minimise crowding at the entrance and exits and to give each Class Bubble their own yard space. Children perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

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

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (School) [RTW(s)]** form, which is available electronically or from the principal. [Click here to download a copy of the RTW\(S\) Form](#)

A RTW form should only be completed **at least 3 days** prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

On receipt of the completed form the principal will provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace 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.

**Note: Induction Training for staff is developed by the DES in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.**

#### 4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

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 the School Leadership.

The Return to Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

**Note: The process for appointment of the Lead Worker representative in schools was agreed centrally between the Department of Education and Skills and the education partners.**

The role of the worker representative) is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- 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 with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Name(s) of Lead Worker representative:	Contact details
Kim Mhic Aindriú	kim@gaelscoilnaduglaise.ie

All staff, parents/guardians, 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.

#### 5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. IPPN has commissioned an independent Policy Statement and Risk Assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings.

It is important that schools review their emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the COVID-19 School Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures should be documented.

Schools should also review their existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments should also be documented.

## 6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

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

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a school is to minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place.

This can be achieved through the following measures:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.

Staff, pupils and visitors should at all times adhere to the up-to-date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

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

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Gaelscoil na Dúglaise will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

## 7. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

### a. *Wash your Hands Frequently*

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:

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

### b. *Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers*

Hand hygiene can also be achieved using a hand sanitiser (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities.

They are available at entry and exit points and in each classroom.

### c. *Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth*

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

**d. Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace.

**Note: Guidance on the physical distancing requirements will be informed by public health advice for schools and will be updated over the summer period.**

**e. Practice 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.

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

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

**f. Do**

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

**g. Do Not**

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

**h. People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable):**

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk. The HSE has set out these groups, which include people who:

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

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

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return-to-Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills.

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

## 8. Control Measures

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/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school.

These control measures are outlined in this document.

The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents/guardians 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.*

The following control measures have been put in place:

### **a. Return to Work Form**

Staff will be required to complete a RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from staff that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.

### **b. 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 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.

### **c. Induction Training for Return to School**

The Department has prepared short induction training for schools.

It is intended that this training will be updated and become more comprehensive to cover all aspects of the return to school safely protocols. The school shares all relevant materials with parents via email.

### **Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Guidance documentation and Information posters are available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters are prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility

including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility and are available in each classroom.

**d. *Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)***

PPE will not be required to be worn within the school facility 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.

Such include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

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

All adults in the building will wear a face covering. Masks are available from the office.

**e. *Wearing of Gloves:***

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It 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. Gloves are available from the office.

**f. *Cleaning***

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school has been made. Specific advice in relation to school cleaning has been set out by the HPSC advice and has been covered in the cleaners' induction training.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

**g. *Access to the school building /contact log***

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

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.

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

#### ***h. Ventilation***

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools'. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g., during break-times or lunchtimes (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. Pupils and staff are advised to wear additional clothing layers to school to ensure that they stay warm in well ventilated rooms. CO2 monitors are in all the upstairs rooms.

#### ***i. First Aid/emergency procedure***

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Gaelscoil na Dúglaise.

In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999

Contact the principal or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

### **9. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how our school will deal with any suspected case that arises. A designated isolation area has been identified in each classroom. (**Wet area**) The isolation area should be 2 metres away from others in the room. An isolation room has also been identified within the school building (The **Courtyard**). If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, a phone call should be made to oifig at extension 201 to inform Niamh Ní Mhaoláin or Eleanor Uí Dhúill. The parents/guardians of the pupils will then be contacted immediately.
- The pupil should sit in the isolation area in the classroom until called to the office when a parent/guardian arrives to the school to collect him/her.
- If it is necessary to isolate a person who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., a staff member) in the isolation room, they should be accompanied there by a staff member, with the staff member keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times. Staff members should wear a face covering in this instance.
- 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.
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their G.P. by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.

If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect.

- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved. The 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. School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes.

### **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. Therefore, parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school. Similarly, staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness. Hand hygiene Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.

### **Learning Support**

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal to a resource room. Where possible, the provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of a Class Bubble.

Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers will be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.

Where children from Third to Sixth receive support in one of the resource rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.

The tables and chairs in the resource rooms will be wiped clean after use

## **10. Staff Duties**

- Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.
- In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
  - Complete the RTW form in hard copy or electronically before returning to work.
  - Inform Niamh Ní Mhaoláin if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate safe return to the workplace.
  - Complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to return to school.
  - Be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
  - Coordinate and work with colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
  - Be aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor own wellbeing.
  - Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Do not return to or attend school if symptoms of COVID-19 are present.
  - Do not return to or attend school in the event of the following:
    - if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 unless you are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms.
    - if living with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 unless you are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms.
    - 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 staff members 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 the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.

## 11. Covid related absence management

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

If a teacher or SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher or SNA for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available for a mainstream class teacher, the DES has advised that schools may “use other non-mainstream teachers to cover the absence”. It is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes; therefore, our school will endeavour to provide for mainstream class teacher absence by using one of our support teachers as a substitute teacher. If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period due to COVID-19, the class teacher (and/or a resource teacher) will endeavour to liaise with the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s) and suggest activities to support the child’s learning at home through. Work may also be provided on our online platform Seesaw and through Zoom.

## 12. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil na Dúglaise aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home, and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the COVID-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to people’s personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements. Gaelscoil na Dúglaise’s COVID-19 Response Plan aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and will continue to make health and wellbeing advice and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events. Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the Professional Development Services for Teachers (PDST) and Centre for School Leadership (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 SpectrumLife 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. The service is also available by texting ‘Hi’ to 087 369 0010 on SMS or WhatsApp. 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

## Gaelscoil na Dúglaise COVID-19 Response Plan

increase engagement with the service. A series of weekly webinars and live talks to promote staff wellbeing in schools is currently available on the wellbeing portal. These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to Niamh Ní Mhaoláin, Karla Ní Leannáin or any member of the In school Management Team.

Signed: Martin O Connell (Cathaoirleach) Dáta: 19ú Lúnasa 2021

Signed: Niamh Ní Mhaoláin ( Príomhoide) Dáta 19ú Lúnasa 2021