**Themes which are critical to our ability to minimising risk associated with COVID-19 in our schools**

* *A balanced approach* - one of the key challenges for schools during this pandemic is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for pupils/students and where teachers feel able to engage with pupils in a way that supports their learning.
* *Apply common sense* - An atmosphere of fear and an overwhelming preoccupation with infection and hygiene can be harmful to teachers and pupils and to the quality of the educational experience without materially reducing the risk of infection beyond what can be achieved with a common-sense approach.
* *Create awareness* - heightened awareness by staff, parents and children (where age appropriate) is required so that they know how to protect themselves and each other and how to recognise and report symptoms of COVID-19 infection.
* *Do everything practical to avoid introduction of Covid-19 into the school* - the most critical part of managing the risks of COVID-19 related to schools is doing everything practical to avoid introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If the infection is not introduced it cannot spread. The risk of introduction is related to how common the infection is in the community served by the school at a given time. If the infection is uncommon in the community then the likelihood of introduction is much lower**.**
* *Stay at home if unwell* - no person (child, teacher or parent) should attend an educational setting if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
* *Keep doing the key measures to keep us all safe* - social (physical) distancing, hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette should be observed by all (children, teachers, parents and visitors). In addition, face coverings will be worn by adults where a 2m distance cannot be maintained.

**Underlying Principles**

* The school has a responsibility to make effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
* Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
* It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
* As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

**Assumptions**

* All children return to school and each class operates within a bubble system.
* The day will have our usual break times of 11 am to 11.10 am and 12.30 to 1 pm
* Within each class from 3rd to 6th, the children will be divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods and as near as possible to 1m between each child.
* Infants to 2nd class will have no social distancing, but will operate in pods also.
* Hand sanitiser will be available at main entry points and in all class and support rooms.
* School drop-off and collection will take place at staggered intervals to allow for social distancing.

**Staggered Drop-off times by surname:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start Time** |  |
| 09.10 | Mainstream Bus Children and Pupils whose surnames begin with A – D |
| 09.15 | All remaining Mainstream pupils |
| 09:20 | Bus/Taxi children in ASD Class |

**Staggered Collection times**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Start Time** |  |
| 13:50 | All Junior and Senior Infant pupils |
| 14.50 | Mainstream Bus Children and pupils whose surnames begin with A - D |
|  | All remaining Mainstream pupils when the above pupils have exited the grounds |

* We ask for co-operation with these times to minimise the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time.
* All pupils line up at their line up point on the yard and enter, when instructed, by staff member
* SNA’s meet the ASD pupils from the ASD Class at the school bus/ taxi and accompany them into the school.
* No parents must enter the school grounds for any reason, at this time.
* Messages for teachers can be sent **by email or by telephoning** the school office.

**Key to Entrances & Exits**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Classes** | **Line Up Point** | **Entry/Exit Point** |
| Infants | End wall of school on Infant Yard | Door Nearest the Gate (as usual) |
| 5th & 6th | Mid line of basketball court | Door Nearest the Gate (as usual) |
| 3rd & 4th | After the railing in front of their classroom | Main School Door (top) |
| 1st & 2nd Class | In their play yard, along the wall | Emergency Exit Door Room 4 |
| ASD Class | - | Use their own main door |

**Collection of Pupils at End of School Day**

* A small number of adults collect their child/ children at the school gate at end of the school day. These parents may enter the grounds from 2.45 pm. They should wait inside the wall on the footsteps provided. (Entry via the top gate – beside the bins - and exit via the main gate with the child) This will ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times.
* Please familiarise yourself with the new entrance and exit routes from school grounds at collection time.
* Adults are requested to maintain 2m social distance at all times.
* We ask that all adults enter and exit the school grounds **swiftly** at their allotted collection times to minimise the amount of people on school grounds at any one time.

***Collection of pupils from Junior Infants, Senior Infants***

* All infant pupils are collected by adults (usually a parent or someone assigned by the parent and the teacher notified) Adults should wait inside the school wall on the allocated footprints (**enter via the top gate**) : Please wait in your car and **ONLY ENTER THE SCHOOL GROUNDS at 1.45 pm, TO AVOID CONGREGATING**
  + Junior and Senior Infants exit with teacher and line up outside at their line-up area (along the end wall of the school). The teacher will open the main gate.
  + The teacher will send over the child to the first parent in the line and they proceed out the main gate to their car, without delay. The teacher then continues this until all children are collected.
  + Bus Children from the ASD Class will exit with SNA’s to the bus.

***Collection of pupils from First to Sixth Class***

* Teachers will walk their classes to the usual line up areas. Bus children and children with Surnames A-D will exit first at 2.50pm, while the remaining pupils exit when directed by staff member on duty.
* A small number of adults collect their child/ children at the school gate at end of the school day. These parents may enter the grounds from 2.45 pm. They should wait inside the wall on the footsteps provided. (Entry via the top gate – beside the bins - and exit via the main gate with the child) This will ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times.
* Parent watches for child/children and the parent meets the child at the main gate . All proceed immediately to their car via the main gate.
* We would ask for great vigilance as the children cross the road. We encourage parents who wait in their cars to only get out while supervising the safety of their child. This is to avoid Congregating and to keep everyone safe.
* We know that many parents wait in their car and older siblings collect their younger siblings and then proceed to their cars. Children waiting for siblings wait at the inside wall next the bus.

**Collection of Children during the School Day**

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day from mainstream classes , the following arrangements will apply.

* When the adult arrives at the school, they should telephone the office (046 9053322) - or if there is no reply or the line is engaged -ring the doorbell at the main entrance to alert school staff to their presence.
* The adult or parent waits at the main school gate.
* The child will be brought from their class by a member of school staff and supervised going to the parent.
* Please be patient as this will take a little time to organise.
* The adult who is collecting will not be asked to sign the child out but must send in an email stating the date, time and reason for leaving school (this was usually done by note) There will be email addresses provided in September.
* No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so
* Adults collecting children from the ASD Class liaise with Mrs. Allen

# Forgotten Items.

If your child has forgotten their lunch or drink and you have to bring it to the school, you must ring the school and inform the school staff that you are outside with the item. There will be a plastic box with a lid, left inside the main gate. Please place the item in the box and the school staff will collect it in due course. Please make sure the item has the child’s name on it.

**What to bring to school?**

All your child needs to bring to school daily is their coat, as well as lunch and their drink in their school bag. (please make sure the drink is in a plastic bag to avoid leakage.)

**Homework and books**

We are taking the first few weeks to settle the children into school and we will not be giving any written homework. Our priority is to adjust back to the rhythm of the school day. Your children will be tired and we encourage some physical activity (a walk, run cycle etc) to help renew their energy each evening. As time goes on we will inform you what we need to do in preparation for homework.

# Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils **should not attend school if** **they are sick or displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.** If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the school building, the following procedures will be implemented:

* Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. The school must always be provided with updated contact details. These can be updated by parents by phoning or emailing the school secretary.
* The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child.
* A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask until exiting the premises is complete.
* If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms.
* The child presenting with symptoms will be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bin provided in the isolation area.
* If the child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child has possible Covid-19 symptoms and will follow the advise given.
* Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
* Parents must ensure that they have a back-up plan for collection of their children if they themselves are not available for prompt collection .

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.

**Children who should not attend school**

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

* Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
* Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
* Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
* Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
* Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school and who have submitted a medical cert stating this.
* Children who have returned home after travelling abroad (unless on the green list) and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
* Children who are generally unwell.

**Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the special education teachers, where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child’s learning at home.

**Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

If the school is notified that a person in your child’s class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

* Public health advice will be sought and followed
* The parents of all children in the class will be notified by the appropriate bodies.

**Personal Equipment**

* In so far as possible, it is requested that all children only bring to school their lunch box and drink in their school bag.
* It is requested that all items (uniform, coat, lunch box and bottle) have the child’s name on them for ease of identification.
* Books sent into school on the first day should all be covered and labelled and will be left in school. Pupils (3rd – 6th) will get their Rental Books on the first day and other classes when the teacher determines it is time to do so. All books, copies, stationery remain in school.

**Shared Equipment**

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

**Break Times**

At this point in time we do not intend to stagger break times, as all classes have their own area in the yard and do not mix with other children who are not in their bubble. The concern at this time is for our staff, who have a very tiny staff room – maximum of three people can enter here at any time to ensure a 2m distance. If social distancing cannot be maintained at this time and teachers cannot get the opportunity to eat their lunch safely, we will have to reconsider staggering the break times in the school.

**Special Education Teaching in Mainstream Classes**

In keeping with our Special Education policy, support will be provided by withdrawal. Support by the Special Education Team will be with one class bubble daily. Ms Malone will work with 3rd/4th class on Day 1 and 5th /6th Class on Day 2 (This means that children may be accessing the support teacher on many occasions on that day. The reason for this is to keep personnel within their bubble each day) Mr. Keane will be with us each Thursday and Friday and he will work with Infants and 1st & 2nd on alternative days.

* Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
* Where children from 3rd to 6th Class receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
* The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean by the SET teacher in between different groups attending.
* There will be no station teaching at the present time, and teachers will evaluate whether it is safe to do team teaching.

**PPE**

Staff, including teachers, who cannot maintain a 2m distance from students or other staff will be required to wear face coverings and visors( if they wish)

Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves, aprons and face masks.

**Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, **it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes.** In such circumstances, the Department of Education has advised that it is possible to deploy a Special Education Teacher to the mainstream classroom and “bank” the day. A substitute teacher may be employed on a later day when one is available to help recover time lost by pupils with Special Education Needs on the day the SET was deployed to the classroom. Where more than one teacher is absent and it is not possible to secure a sufficient amount of substitute teachers, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

**PE**

PE will take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings.

**Review and Update:**

Due to the unpredictable times of this Covid 19 pandemic, this logistics plan will be reviewed often. Staff on the ground will monitor and report items to the Lead Worker. Together they will assess how this plan is working and what needs to be changed. Our utmost concern and basis for any decision made will be the safety of our school community.

**Saction:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

**Signed:** 

**Date:** 18/08/2020