**Underlying Principles**

* The school has a responsibility to make every 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 classes operate within a bubble system
* The school is split into 8 class groups(bubbles) where each class group(bubble) is prevented from mixing with another class group during the school day.
* In Scoil Mhuire the 8 class groups will be made up of Junior infants, Senior Infants, 1st class, 2nd clas,3rd class, 4th class, 5th class and 6th class.
* It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble. However, children will be arranged in PODs where possible in these classes.
* Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per Pod. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod.All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.
* Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and in all class and support rooms. Parents are advised not to send hand sanitiser bottles in with their children in their school bags.
* There will be two breaks as normal each day-10 minute break at 11:00a.m. and 30 minute break at 12:30p.m.

**Key to Entrances & Exits**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Entrance and Exit Points** | **Number** |
| **Main Front Door of school beside intercom** | **1** |
| **Front Door at right of school opposite garden bench** | **2** |
| **5th class exit door in 5th class room at rear of school** | **3** |
| **P.E. hall door at rear of school** | **4** |
| **Junior infant class room door in back yard** | **5** |
| **Buzzer door near staff room at rear of school** | **6** |

**Entrance & Exit Points for Specific Classes**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CLASS** | **ENTRANCE & EXIT POINT** |
| **Junior Infants** | **5** |
| **Senior Infants** | **Morning (6) Evening (1)** |
| **1st class** | **Morning (6) Evening (2)** |
| **2nd class** | **Morning (4) Evening (2)** |
| **3rd class** | **Morning (2) Evening (1)** |
| **4th class** | **2** |
| **5th class** | **3** |
| **6th class** | **1** |

Arrangements for dropping off and picking up pupils from the school facility will be organised to maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe social distance between drivers/parents/guardians and all school staff.

**Arrival at School**

* Parents/guardians will be encouraged to use the “drop and go” system in the mornings when dropping off pupils. Pupils should be dropped off at upper roundabout near school black gate.
* The principal and in-school management team will then direct the pupil to her designated line. Junior infants-2nd class will line in the back yard near the junior infant building and 3rd-6th class will line in the basketball yard.
* These areas will be supervised from 9:10a.m. each morning by the principal and in-school management team. Each class should line up at their designated point with social distancing observed.
* The class teacher will invite the children to enter the building via their designated entrance point at 9:20a.m.
* No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building.
* No pupils should enter inside black gate at roundabout before 9:10a.m.
* Messages for teachers can be sent by email or by phoning the school office.

**Collection from School at end of school day**

* In the evening time collections will be made from the black gate at the front of the building.
* A collect and go system will operate here. You can either pick up on the roundabout or park in car park and walk up the pedestrian walk way. Pedestrian walk way is to be used as a one way system for upward travel only. Two bollards will be placed at the top of this walkway and children only will be allowed beyond the bollards.
* Each class will have a designated line which will be clearly marked at the front of the building.
* As is the case in the morning this will be supervised by the in-school management team and the principal.
* Parents will be asked to socially distance at all times and wear face coverings/masks/visors while waiting to collect children in the evening outside front black gate at upper roundabout area.
* In the interest of the health and safety of all we ask parents to be patient at collection time and abide by health and safety regulations at all times
* When the school day for each class is over the following arrangements will apply –
  + Junior Infants and Senior Infants - the class teacher will bring the children to their designated exit point at the front of the school and will release the children into the care of the adult who is there to collect them.
  + 1st – 6th Class – the class teacher will allow each pod to leave the classroom separately in order to minimise contact and assemble as a whole class in their designated line at the front of the school.

**Collection of Children during the School Day**

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

* Please phone ahead if collecting child early
* When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived
* The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff
* The adult who is collecting will be asked to give their details for the school’s contact tracing log
* No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

**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
* Children who have returned home after travelling abroad from a country not 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 learning support teacher, where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child’s learning at home which will be shared with parents.



**Personal Equipment**

* In so far as possible, it is requested that children from 2nd to 6th Class will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment.
* It is further requested that all items have the child’s name on them for ease of identification.
* For children in Junior, Senior Infants and first class, the school will provide an individual bag which will hold each child’s pencils, crayons, etc., and which will be labelled with their name.

**Shared Equipment**

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

**Yards**

Each bubble of 8 classes will have access to the yards during their allotted break times. The yard has been divided up into 8 separate sections. Each section has been clearly marked with coloured boundary lines. Increased yard supervision at break times has been organised to prevent class groups(bubbles) mixing and going outside their boundary lines.

**Learning Support**

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

* 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 and if this isn’t possible a face mask/visor must be worn by these teachers.
* 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 in between different groups attending

**PPE**

PPE will be worn by staff in any situation where 2M social distancing is not possible. Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will also wear appropriate PPE including gloves 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 SET teacher that is attached to that class will work with that class for the day.

**PE**

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to the P.E. equipment sets that have been distributed to each of the 8 class groups (bubbles). All classes are encouraged to participate in ‘The Daily Mile’ as part of their P.E. programme.

If the PE hall is being used by class groups, common touch points such as door handles and light switches should be cleaned at intervals throughout the school day. The P.E. hall will be timetabled to ensure there is a good gap between time slots for each class group.

**Extra-curricular Activities**

The Board of Management has decided not to allow any pre or after school classes take place on the school site in the first term as it would not be recommended that children from different class groups(bubbles) participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time. The Board of Management will review this at the end of the first term.

**Corridors**

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.

We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when in the corridors and also social distancing rules.

**Additional Measures to Limit Interactions**

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

**Doors and Windows**

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

**Cloakrooms and Toilets**

Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 5th and 6th class will use the toilets in their class rooms.

2nd and 4th will use the toilet block area at the bottom of the main corridor opposite their class rooms. Each toilet cubicle and sink will be labelled to ensure only one class uses each specific toilet cubicle and sink in this area.

1st and 3rd class will use the toilet block area at the top of the main corridor opposite their class rooms. Each toilet cubicle and sink will be labelled to ensure only one class uses each specific toilet cubicle and sink in this area.

All pupils from junior infants, senior infants, 5th and 6th class will hang their coats in their classrooms. Children from 2nd to 4th class will use their designated cloakroom off the main corridor. Children from 1st class will use the coat hooks on the corridor near the principal’s office.

**Lunches**

Parents must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice.

**Uniforms/Tracksuits**

Our uniform policy for the new school year remains unchanged. The girls will be expected to wear the formal uniform and school tracksuit on P.E. days. (Infants will continue to wear the school track-suit each day as normal.) We do appreciate that parents may wish to wash uniforms more regularly and the school will be taking a common sense approach to this change.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities.**  Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day.

**Office**

A contactless payment system has been set up to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/Guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for contactless payments through the school office.

Children should not be sent to the Secretary’s Office to deliver messages.

As far as possible, staff members should not enter the Office area and should speak with the Secretary at the glass window area of her office.

**Photocopying**.

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided and sanitise/wash hands before use.

**ICTs**

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley. There will be a 72 hour gap between use of mini-laptop devices by different classes.

**Staffroom**

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn. A temporary second staff room area for breaks will be set up to ensure staff are socially distanced at break and lunch times.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups.

**Teaching and Learning**

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

**Wellbeing of the School Community**

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

• A sense of safety

• A sense of calm

• A sense of belonging and connectedness to school

• A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy

• A sense of hope

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

**Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE’s Health Promotion Team.

An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.

The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of ‘Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile’.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

**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

* The teacher and parents of all children in the class will be notified
* Public health advice will be sought and followed

**Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19 in the school:**

**The Board of Management will*:***

* Appoint an appropriate person (school principal) for dealing with suspected cases.
* Have a designated isolation area available within the school building. The designated area and the route to the designated area should be easily accessible. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 needs to be considered so having additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with additional cases must be planned. It would be important that the designated area has the ability to isolate the person away from other workers/children.
* Our isolation area will be the small room at the end of the corridor near the 5th class room which will be supervised by the principal until a parent collects the child at the front door.

**If a person displays symptoms of Covid-19 the following procedure is to be implemented**:

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

* Isolate the staff member/pupil and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
* Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the principal/deputy principal and go to the isolation area.
* Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
* Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
* If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians of this child will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.
* Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor.
* The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
* Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
* If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport 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.