

BELLURGAN NATIONAL SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Dermot McCoy.

*Bellurgan,
Co. Louth.*



*Roll No.
16249E*

Covid Response Plan Bellurgan N.S

Lead Worker Representative: Mrs Eilis McGuigan

Deputy Lead Worker Representative: Mrs Rachel Duffy

The Board of Management of Bellurgan N.S. in collaboration with the staff of the school intend to implement the following measures in order to facilitate the safe and orderly return of pupils and reopening of our school.

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.

School Visitors

Visits to the school during the school day should be by prior arrangement and visitors should be received at a specific contact point (for example Main Door) and should be subject to the same controls that apply to staff entering the school. Everyone entering the building should be required

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to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitizer and fill in the contact visitor log. This may need to be supervised.

Parents visiting for meeting with teachers should be by appointment and should be facilitated in a way that observes social distancing requirement. Meetings should be arranged to ensure that congregation of parents in waiting areas is minimised for example when parents travel for a meeting by private car they may be invited to remain in the car until the teacher is ready to meet them.

Staff & Children who should not attend school

If you are in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children or staff who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children or staff who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children or staff who are a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children or staff who have been in CLOSE contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children or staff with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children or staff if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Children or staff if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.
- Children or staff if they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff or children are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.

We advise staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.

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Staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test.

Additional Staff Duties

- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

Support and promote good hand hygiene.

- Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important, when to wash their hands and how to wash their hands
- Promote good hand hygiene and display posters throughout the facility available on the HPSC website.
- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser
- Hand sanitiser dispensers will be placed at entry and exit points of schools and classrooms and are an appropriate alternative in most cases. Care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risk of falls.
- Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins needs to be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitizer. Hand washing facilities are to be to the greatest extent practical.
- Wash hand basins, warm running water, liquid soap dispensers and hand drying facilities will be provided in all toilets, kitchens and other food preparation areas.
- Foot operated pedal bins should be located near wash basins for disposing of paper towels.
- Hand washing facilities should be maintained in a good condition and supplies of paper towels and soap should be topped up regularly to encourage pupils to use them. (School Cleaner)
- Cleaning staff should be reminded to check the soap dispensers at frequent intervals.
- Good quality disposable paper towels (preferably wall mounted) should be available at or near the wash hand basins for drying hands. Shared towels should not be used.
- Posters displaying hand washing technique and promoting hand-washing to be placed on the wall adjacent to washing facilities (these can be downloaded free from www.hpsc.ie and laminated or placed in a plastic sleeve).

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- Where hand rubs/gels are used in the school setting, care should be taken to ensure that children do not accidentally ingest the products.
- Young children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.
- Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame

Frequency of hand hygiene

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene;

- ✓ On arrival and exit at school building
- ✓ Before eating or drinking
- ✓ After using the toilet
- ✓ After petting animals
- ✓ After playing outdoors
- ✓ When their hands physically dirty
- ✓ When they cough or sneeze
- ✓ When entering and exiting vehicles

Pupils and staff should learn how to perform hand hygiene with an effective technique (for example the World Health Organisation technique). Opportunities to perform hand hygiene should be provided and good technique encouraged.

Face Coverings

It is also recommended that primary school teachers and staff wear face coverings at all times.

Primary school children will not be required to wear face coverings under any circumstances.

Face coverings are not suitable for anyone who:

- has trouble breathing
- is unconscious or incapacitated
- is unable to remove it without help
- has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering

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It is essential that those wearing a cloth face covering understand, the purpose is not to protect themselves but to reduce onward transmission. Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

Wearing of Gloves

SNA to wear gloves, face covering (Surgical Grade) and a disposable apron when assisting with pupils with toileting. The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or teachers 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. Washing or use of hand sanitiser on gloved hands is not appropriate.

Physical Distancing

- A distance of 1 metre should be maintained between desks or between individual pupils. It is recognized that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore, achieving this recommendation in the first 4 years of primary school, is not a prerequisite to reopening a primary school for all pupils.
- Where possible, work-stations should be allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces that are shared.
- The risk of spread of infection may be reduced by structuring pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or 'Pods' within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical.
- If a class is divided into Pods, there should be at least [1m distance] between individual Pods within the Class Bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible.
- Generally speaking 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 each class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

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- Pod sizes should be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context.
- To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times.
- Different Class Bubbles should where possible have separate breaks and meal times or separate areas at break or meal times
 - Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible
- A distance of 2 metres is recommended for physical distancing by staff. In the context of education this is especially relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching for example when on breaks and arriving for work.

Use of Shared Equipment

Toys

All toys should 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 body fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.
- When purchasing toys choose ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary). • If cloth or soft toys are used they should be machine washable.
- Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils or those with Special Educational Needs may be inclined to put in their mouths should be capable of being washed and disinfected.
- All play equipment should be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned, they should be discarded.
- Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's cleaning instructions should always be followed.
- At this time, soft modelling materials and play dough where used should be for individual use only.

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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.
- 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 Equipment

Where possible students should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics

- Shared electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use by the last user before they are returned.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products used on electronic devices.
- Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning.

Music Equipment/Instruments

- To the extent possible, instruments should not be shared between students and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between use by the last user. Wind instruments should be cleaned and disinfected between use.

Shared book/library policy

- Where practical each pupil should have dedicated school books.
- Children should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

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- Library books which are used in the classroom or school library setting can be returned to the shelf and made available again without any delay.

Shared Sports Equipment

- Children should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after these activities.
- Minimize equipment sharing, and clean shared equipment between use by last user before items are returned.

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Daily Protocols

School Transport- Bus Eireann are responsible for the transportation of pupils to and from our ASD Class and will issue further guidance to those travelling on school buses either directly or through their media outlets.

- Pupils must sanitise when getting on and off the bus.
- Driver and Bus Escort will be wearing PPE,
- At the moment, there is no requirement for **primary** pupils to wear masks or face coverings on school transport.

Drop -Off and Collection Routine

The School Board of Management has been working to ensure a safe return to school for all pupils. We have now finalised our plans for drop-off and collection of the children every day.

- Pupils are encouraged, in so far as it is possible and safe for them to do so, to walk or cycle to school.
- Parents/Guardians are not permitted to enter the school grounds.
- On the first morning, the children will be directed to their class bubble entry doors. Staff will be present along the route to direct and reassure. Please be patient as we endeavour to embed these necessary precautionary and protective practices at the beginning of the school year.

It is imperative that you:

- Familiarise yourself with the following drop-off and collection times and routines.
- Do not come within 2 metres of others and drive away once your child/children has/have entered the grounds to make space for other cars.

Arrival at school

Pupils are encouraged to arrive in school between 9.00am and 9.15am so that they are in class for the start of the school day at 9.20am. The school building will not be open before 9.00 o'clock each morning. Our school will not be operating a staggered start or end to the school day.

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1. Families which have one pupil attending the school will be asked to be dropped in the school car park as per normal.
2. Families who have two or more pupils attending the school will be asked to drop off in the Bellurgan United Carpark at our wooden gate.

We ask for co-operation with these times as it will mean that the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time will be minimised. Messages for teachers can be sent by email to your child's teacher or by phoning the school office.

Pupil Entrance and Exit Points

<u>Class</u>	<u>Entrance / Exit Points</u>
Junior and Senior Infants Mrs Sheelan's Class	Staff Room Door Entrance
Jumpstart Pre-school	Back Entrance Door
Rang 1/2	Door outside their Classroom
Rang 3	Door outside their Classroom
Rang 4 /5	Fire door Hall
Rang 6	Main Entrance Door

End of School Day

- Junior and Senior Infants are to be collected in the school car park at 2pm.
- The 3pm collection will be as follows; Our school carpark for families with one pupil attending the school. Bellurgan United Carpark for families with more than one pupil attending the school. (Same as morning Drop Off).

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.

1. When the adult arrives at the school in the front school carpark, they should phone the office to alert the office that they have arrived

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2. The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff
3. No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

Classroom Allocation

To facilitate social distancing guidelines, 4th and 5th class will be temporarily based in the School Hall this school year, as they are our biggest school grouping. 3rd class will be where 4th class was last year. All other classes will remain in the same classroom.

Packing the School Bag

1. All **lunch boxes/water bottles** must be sanitised / washed thoroughly every day before being placed in the child's school bag.
2. Water bottles - to be filled at home only. If two or more bottles are required to take to school, that is no problem.
3. No toys to be brought to school in the pupil's schoolbag.
4. **Infants:** Crayons, pencils, rubbers etc. will be provided by the school and stored in separate containers for each child.
5. **1st – 6th Class Pupils:** bring own pencil case to school on the first day. This must remain in school. Please ensure all property is labelled with the child's name as sharing is not permitted.

• **Optional:** Child's own hand sanitiser and tissues **labelled** with child's name.

Uniforms

• Children's uniforms must be clean and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols. When dressing every morning, please consider that rooms will be well ventilated. Windows and doors will be kept ajar. Vests and layers may be appropriate.

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Break Times

Break times may be staggered, and we will inform pupils upon their return. Please note that we endeavour to get out for break times onto the yard and school field daily. The school yard and field will be marked out to ensure children from different class bubbles will not interact with other bubbles. No sport's equipment is to be brought to school by pupils, balls will be supplied by the school and will be sanitised after use. No child is permitted to stay in at break time as the classrooms must be ventilated/cleaned.

Children's Learning Spaces

- All excess furniture has been removed from the classroom where possible so as to provide additional space. Classrooms have been reconfigured to ensure a one metre distance between pupils (3rd – 6th) where possible. Pupils will be organised into pods within the classroom.
- Classes will be organised into pods and interaction between classes outside of the bubble is not to take place.
 - Resources that can be easily cleaned will be used and toys and materials that are difficult to clean e.g. dress up clothes or soft toys during this temporary Covid-19 emergency will not to be used.
 - Pupils will hand sanitise before and after using any materials.
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Teaching and Learning

Curriculum

Supporting children to settle back to school is a primary focus when reopening schools.

The subject areas of Gaeilge, English, Maths, SPHE and PE have been prioritised for reopening.

The Department of Education have recommended we cover the Relationships and Sexuality strand

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of the SPHE curriculum in the first term. This weblink provides resources for parents on the topic of relationships and sexuality: https://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy_bodies

The mandatory Stay Safe Programme will also be taught in the first term. The **programme** seeks to enhance children's self-protective skills by participation in lessons on **safe** and unsafe situations, bullying, inappropriate touch, secrets, telling and stranger danger.

Wellbeing

We will be 'Slowing Down to Catch Up'. A major focus of the reopening of our school will be on supporting the school community's well-being. The following websites have been recommended by the Department of Education as e-mental health services, including on-line counselling, provided by the HSE/HSE-funded service providers including spunout.ie, [Jigsaw](http://Jigsaw.org), [MyMind](http://MyMind.org), [Childline](http://Childline.org) and [Turn2Me](http://Turn2Me.org)

Teachers are taking part in online training and have been provided with a range a resources to help and support the children's well-being. For children struggling with readjusting to school our learning support teacher will work to design School Support Plans

P.E.

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors. Visiting coaches and after school clubs will no longer be allowed on school grounds. This will be reviewed at a later stage.

Learning Support

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 will 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.

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- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

Homework

In order to minimise the movement of books, materials and equipment, most if not all school copies and textbooks will remain in school. There may be no homework for pupils in the initial phase of the return to school as the staff focus on pupils' wellbeing, assessment and social integration.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that 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, 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.

Distance Learning

Explicit provision will be made for contingency curriculum planning for a situation in which there might be an unexpected period of school closure. We will continue to build on the experience of using digital technology during the school closure period to support contingency arrangements in the event that pupils need to continue their learning in a distance learning environment. Seesaw will be considered if this situation should the need arise again.

Staff Returning to Work

The BOM has ratified a COVID-19 policy for Bellurgan N.S. All staff will undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. Each staff member must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form 3 days prior to a return to work.

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P.P.E.

It is recommended that primary school teachers and staff wear face coverings at all times. Primary school children will not be required to wear face coverings under any circumstances. Special Class staff and SNAa to wear Surgical grade masks.

Sacraments

The Sacraments of Confirmation, First Confession and Holy Communion are all scheduled to take place in Term 3. Parents will be updated by email closer to the time of each blessing as we continue to liaise with Fr Duffy. However, due to social distancing requirements and availability of space in the church family numbers permitted to attend will be limited.

Communication

All communication from the school will be made via TextAParent for or via email. Please ensure we have up to date contact information for two guardians (Collection when pupils return).

Meetings between parents and teachers can only take place by prior arrangement. In the first instance, parents should phone the office if they need to speak with a teacher, leaving a message with Rachel. Please note that for the first 2 weeks of school we will be prioritising settling the children back and unless the matter is urgent, we will return phone calls following the settling in period. The teacher will then ring back you back to discuss the issue.

You will no longer be permitted to enter the school building without prior arrangement; therefore, all communication must go through the office. Unfortunately, this is not the way we would prefer to operate our school, but we are following Department of Education Guidelines.

When a Positive Case is identified in our School

- In all instances where COVID-19 is positively confirmed in a school age child in community testing (referred by G.P) or as part of close contact testing in the community,

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Public Health are immediately notified and a Public Health Risk Assessment is initiated with the school by local HSE public health Schools Teams. Where COVID-19 is detected in an adult in the community, either through symptomatic or close contact testing and when initial contact tracing confirms that they work in a school setting, Public Health are immediately notified and the Public Health Risk Assessment is initiated with the school by HSE School Teams in a similar way. A principal may also notify the HSE Schools Teams directly if s/he is notified by a teacher or other staff member, however this is not necessary as the process described above will take place in any event.

- If an issue arises a school may only temporarily cease on site provision with the permission of Department of Education and on the advice of Public Health. Schools can not inform parents of a positive case until Public Health issue the guidance for a school to follow.

Dedicated testing of close contacts from a school when there is a positive case

Public Health has in place prioritised testing for those close contacts of a confirmed case within the school community.

Covid-19 test appointments are issued as a priority for school based close contacts through a specific schools referral process within the HSE. Public Health will determine when they wish the swabs to be undertaken. This may be 'as soon as possible' but it may also be determined for clinical reasons that the swabs should be undertaken in a day or so time. At the point of testing, swabs for the school group are sent to the laboratory as a 'red flagged' batch to be processed as a priority on delivery to the laboratory. The swabs have a specific school reference number to allow batch reporting of results for the particular school setting. This ensures fast turnaround times for testing and enables swift onward further public health actions if required.

Definition of a close contact in an educational setting

The Department is aware that the schools have sought clarity regarding the definition of a close contact in an educational setting. The Department has asked for clarify, and the HPSC, the agency with responsibility for this matter, has published the following definition of a close contact in an educational setting, as set out below. This has been published on their website. The Department of Education does not have a role in this process.

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As per current HPSC close contacts guidelines a clinical Public Health Risk Assessment (PHRA) will be undertaken for all educational settings where a confirmed case has attended whilst infectious. This PHRA will determine the close contacts.

Close contacts definition:

- Any person who has had face to face contact within less than 1 metre with a confirmed case of COVID-19 for >15 minutes in a school day.
- Any person who has been between 1 and 2 metres from a confirmed case of Covid-19 for >15 minutes in a school day with consideration of other mitigation measures e.g. face-coverings, pods, ventilation, IPC measures or uncertain compliance with mitigation measures in place (assessed through clinical PHRA)

Contacts are assessed from contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19 during their infectious period - 48 hours before the onset of symptoms if symptomatic, or 24 hours before the test for Covid-19 was taken in those who are asymptomatic.

It is important to note that the response to confirmed cases or outbreaks of Covid-19 in the community or in a school is the responsibility of, and will be led and managed by, Public Health HSE. All decisions as to appropriate actions following a confirmed case or outbreak will be made by their teams in the context of a full Public Health Risk Assessment procedure.

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Appendix 1

Cleaning

Training will be provided to cleaning staff in relation to enhanced Covid-19 cleaning protocols by the Department of Education. Each classroom will have disinfected spray, cloths and wipes. These are to be used when required throughout the school day and not to be used by pupils. Staff are advised that they are responsible for cleaning personal items that have been brought to work and are likely to be handled at work or during breaks (for example, mobile phone and laptops) and to avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or they will need to clean the surface after the personal item is removed. Staff and pupils to avoid sharing items such as cups, bottles, cutlery, and pens.

Current HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection.

Cleaning staff are instructed to wear gloves when cleaning and should be aware of the need to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, both before and after wearing gloves.

Cleaning is best achieved using a general-purpose detergent and warm water, clean cloths, mops and the mechanical action of wiping/scrubbing. The area should then be rinsed and dried. The routine use of disinfectants is generally not appropriate but is recommended in circumstances where there is a higher risk of cross-infection for example someone has become ill whilst at school or if there has been a spillage of blood, faeces or vomit. Disinfectants are potentially hazardous and must be used with caution and according to the manufacturer's instructions. Surfaces and items must be cleaned before a disinfectant is applied as most disinfectants are inactivated by dirt.

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- The manufacturer's instructions for mixing, using and storing solutions must always be followed.
- Using excessive amounts of cleaning agents will not kill more germs or clean better but it will damage work surfaces, make floors slippery and give off unpleasant odours.
- Water should be changed when it looks dirty, after cleaning bathrooms and after cleaning the kitchen.
- Always clean the least dirty items and surfaces first (for example countertops before floors, sinks before toilets).
- Always clean high surfaces first, and then low surfaces.
- Separate colour coded cleaning cloths and cleaning equipment should be used for kitchen areas, classrooms and toilets.
- Cleaning cloths can either be disposable or reusable. Disposable cloths should be disposed of each day.
- Ideally, reusable cloths should be laundered daily on a hot wash cycle (at least 60°C) in a washing machine and then tumble dried.
- Ideally, mop heads should be removed and washed in the washing machine at 60°C at the end of each day or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- If a school does not have a washing machines, after use the cloths and mops should be cleaned thoroughly with warm water and detergent, then disinfected using a low concentration of household bleach rinsed and air dried.
- Mop heads/buckets should not be cleaned in a sink that is used for food preparation.
- Mop heads should not be left soaking in dirty water.
- Buckets should be emptied after use, washed with detergent and warm water and stored dry.
- If equipment is stored wet, it allows germs to grow increasing the risk of cross infection.
- Waste bins should be emptied on a daily basis.
- . Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as vending machines, coffee machines and door handles

Toilets

- School toilets should be clean and in good repair and monitored regularly.
- All toilet areas should have hand washing facilities.

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- Toilets, wash hand basins and surrounding areas should be cleaned at least daily and whenever there is visible soiling.
- The cleaning of toilets, bathroom sinks and sanitary facilities used by pupils and or staff should be carefully performed.
- Toilets should be cleaned thoroughly using a general-purpose detergent paying particular attention to frequently touched areas such as toilet flush handles, toilet seats, basins and taps, and toilet door handles.
- Separate cloths should be used for cleaning the toilet and wash hand basin to reduce the risk of spreading germs from the toilet to the wash hand basin.
 - ✓ Cleaning staff should inspect the toilets and hand washing facilities at regular intervals to ensure;
 - ✓ The toilets and wash hand basins are in good working order (for example the locks on toilets are working, toilets are not blocked).
 - ✓ There is a plentiful supply of liquid soap, paper towels and toilet rolls.
 - ✓ Waste bins are not overflowing.
 - ✓ A checklist should be located in the toilets which is dated and signed at regular intervals.

Schedule of environmental cleaning

- Each setting should be cleaned at least once per day. If there is access to additional cleaning support during school hours this should be focused on frequently touched objects and surfaces e.g., door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests and communal eating areas.
- Any crockery and cutlery in shared kitchen areas should be cleaned with warm water and washing up liquid and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use.

Cleaning/disinfecting rooms where a child or staff member with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 was present

- The room should be cleaned as soon as is practicably possible.
- Once the room is vacated, the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

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- Disinfection only works reliably on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning never instead of cleaning.
- The person assigned to clean the area should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron
- Clean the environment and the furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine-based product such as sodium hypochlorite (often referred to as household bleach).
- Chlorine based products are available in different formats including wipes. Alternatively use a two in one process of cleaning and disinfection with a single product for example certain wipes.
- If you are not familiar with chlorine based disinfectants then please refer to the HPSC Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools available at <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/lifestages/schoolhealth/>.
- Pay special attention to frequently touched flat surfaces, the backs of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces or items that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be put back into use.
- Carpets (if present) do not require special cleaning unless there has been a spillage however for ease of cleaning, it is preferable to avoid carpets in areas where possible (Existing carpets do not need to be removed)

Cleaning of communal areas if a person is diagnosed with COVID-19

If a child or adult diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then these areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined above) as soon as is practicably possible.

- Pay special attention to frequently touched sites including door handles, backs of chairs, taps of washbasins, toilet handles. Once cleaning and disinfection have been completed and all surfaces are completely dry, the area can be put back into use.

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Appendix 2

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Keep Calm and Stay Safe

School staff should be encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

Please talk with your child about feeling sick at school. If he/she has a sore throat, let him/her know that it's okay to tell the teacher. This will be hard for the first child and we appreciate this. Know that in cases where a child is displaying a COVID-19 symptom, our staff have been trained to deal with this in a very calm, reassuring manner. Most times a sore throat is simply that and we must all model that in how we make the child feel whilst still following the procedure for a suspected case of COVID-19 where a symptom is present.

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented. A nominated member of the school management team will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to:

- ✓ If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately by the school secretary.
- ✓ The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area by a member of staff. The isolation area is a section coordinated off in the school office. It is important to keep at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times. Remember that the virus is spread by droplets so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others, even if they are in the same room. If there is more than one case, a contingency plan will come into operation and the SET Rooms will operate as Isolation rooms
- ✓ Provide a mask 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. They should continue to wear their mask until they get home.

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- ✓ 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 isolate 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 general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- ✓ If the pupil is 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. (See Appendix 2). The school office / Room will close completely for cleaning (SET Rooms if required) and the secretary will be based in the staffroom with the school portable phone until the school office is opened again after cleaning.
- ✓ 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 are essential at all times.

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 parents/guardians of all children in the class will be notified
- Public health advice will be sought and followed

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Appendix 3

Room Ventilation

The following practical measures for the deployment of good ventilation practices in schools should be considered in the implementation of our COVID-19 Response Plans:

1. In summary, the overall approach for schools should be to have windows open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. It is worth noting that windows do not need to be open as wide in windy/colder weather in order to achieve the same level of airflow into the classroom. This will assist in managing comfort levels in classrooms during periods of colder weather.
2. Most schools rely on the opening of windows i.e. natural ventilation and therefore it is important that windows and air vents can be accessed and opened.
3. Rooms should be well ventilated before occupancy each day. This can be achieved by ensuring that at the end of the school day each evening, the windows in each room should be opened (as wide as practical and safe while also considering security issues) for at least 15 minutes to ventilate the room fully.
4. Windows should also be open at break times and at lunchtimes for at least 15 minutes where possible.
5. Classrooms for the first class on the following school day (where the above end of day ventilating has occurred) can consider maintaining partially opened windows as per guidance below to keep the room fresh and prevent stuffiness and condensations etc.
6. Achieving fresh air via a number of windows partially opened as required rather than one window fully open can help to maximise the use of window driven natural ventilation distribution across the room without causing discomfort.
7. In colder weather any local chilling effect can be offset by partially opening the windows nearest and above the radiators.
8. Make sure that air movement is not blocked by furniture or window blinds and curtains.
9. Consideration should be given to local circumstances that may require to have

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additional windows open such as after break time activities

10. Rooms with adequate fresh air should not be stuffy or have condensation on the window glass.

11. Schools should also ensure that all permanent ventilation openings in rooms are fully open and not blocked by wall hangings etc. These normally are either a circular or rectangle ventilation grill on the external classroom wall or linear slot type ventilators built into the window frames. All of these should be opened all the time, if they have been taped and sealed for decorating purposes then the tape/sealing should be removed. If a room does not have permanent background ventilation, provision of same should be considered based on professional construction advice and current Building Regulations.

12. All mechanical ventilation systems and any air conditioning systems should be set to 100% fresh air, any air conditioning units that cannot operate on 100% fresh air (check with unit suppliers if in doubt) should be left off unless it is complemented by an adequate outside air supply such as openable windows, as this can help to provide outside air to occupants and maintain thermal comfort.

13. If the corridors and staircases have no identifiable ventilation systems and rely on air infiltration from adjoining spaces as many transient spaces do, consideration should be given to ventilating these areas before and after break times by opening doors etc., this needs to be considered taking into account the fire strategy of the building. Where stairwells have opening windows, consideration should be given to their utilisation.

14. Keeping open the internal doors into classrooms for periods of time may assist with increasing air movement and ventilation rate. It is important to note that fire doors should not be kept open unless fitted with approved automatic closers so that they function as fire doors in the event of an alarm or fire.

15. Schools should ensure there is appropriate ventilation of staffrooms, offices and other areas used primarily by staff, and in the context that some of these areas are used by different groups of staff at different times. This is in addition to the use of face coverings and adequate cleaning.

16. Schools should ensure there is appropriate ventilation of areas such as sanitary

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facilities, gyms, multi-purpose rooms and libraries etc. which are used by different groups of pupils and promote proactive use of open windows and any extractor fans when these spaces are in use.

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Appendix 4

Additional Measures for Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs

The School COVID-19 Response Plan recognises that additional consideration is required to support children with special educational needs and the staff who engage with them. These considerations are referenced in the HPSC advice on the Re-opening of Schools (June 2020). For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school. A precautionary approach should be taken. Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness. A precautionary approach should be taken.

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.

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

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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.

Specific Advice relating to the work of SNAs in close contact settings and mitigation measures to be observed in those settings

Specific advice has been provided by the HPSC for the work of SNAs (updated January 2021) and it is intended that while directed to SNAs it can also be applicable to all school staff who work delivering personal care or attention within 2metres to a pupil. This advice does not materially differ to the original guidance issued in June 2020 but as it is recently provided by HPSC with a particular focus on special education settings, it is set out below. It notes that the “guidance is not a rulebook that must be followed to the letter. The appropriate use of this guidance requires the use of compassion and good sense and a reasonable judgment of the level of risk in most situations. If the general principles of this guidance are implemented, the risk that any given pupil or staff member in the educational setting on any given day has infectious COVID-19 is very low. All additional measures are applied as practical to the context with a view to further lowering the risk of transmission to staff or pupils in the event that a person with infectious COVID-19 is at school”.

The role of the Special Needs Assistant and Associated Risks of COVID-19

People living with certain disabilities associated with increased medical vulnerability may be disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The measures taken to control the spread of COVID-19 can also have a very serious impact on people with disability. Some disabled children and young people have additional care needs that must be met to support them in achieving their full potential. Children have a right to education and ensuring continued

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access to education for people living with disability is critical to managing the public health emergency in an inclusive way.

Special Needs Assistants play a vital role in supporting the additional care needs of some children and young people.

- Some parts of the work performed by SNAs are similar to tasks performed by healthcare workers and in particular, the nature of the work is such that it is often not possible to maintain distance;
- Some children and young people concerned may display behaviours that are associated with an increased risk of virus transmission if they are infectious;
- Some children and young people concerned may have limited ability to self-report symptoms therefore recognising infection may be more difficult;
- In this context, there is a requirement for specific guidance to support the work of SNAs and any other people who may provide similar support for children and young people with additional care needs.

Reducing the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the Educational Setting

The virus that causes COVID-19 cannot spread in any setting unless it is introduced.

Although there is significant anxiety about introduction of virus on objects in practice the virus is essentially always introduced by a person who is infectious and is shedding the virus.

Although some people with no signs or symptoms can be infectious, people are generally most infectious for others when they have symptoms and signs of infection.

1. School staff should be familiar with the main symptoms and signs of COVID-19 (see above) so that they may be able to recognise if a pupil develops obvious signs of infection.
2. Pupils (as appropriate to their ability) their parents, guardians and families should be informed of the main symptoms and signs of COVID-19 (see above) so that they may be able to recognise if a pupil develops obvious signs of infection.
3. School staff as well as pupils (as appropriate to their ability), their parents, guardians and families should be aware that they must not attend school or training if they have symptoms or signs that may suggest COVID-19 until they have taken appropriate medical advice and

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testing if appropriate. They should be aware that they should not attend school or training if they have been told they are close contacts of a person with COVID-19. These messages should be reinforced regularly.

4. School staff as well as pupils (as appropriate to their ability), their parents, guardians and families should be aware of the general advice they should follow outside of the educational setting to lower the risk that they become infected with COVID-19.

5. Limiting the number of people entering the educational/training setting to those essential to provide the service reduces risk of introduction of the virus.

6. Staff should be alert for any signs of illness that suggest that they, a pupil or a colleague may have COVID-19 on arrival for school and throughout the day.

Reducing Mixing Between Groups

1. To the greatest degree that is practical in the context of the educational and care needs of the pupils groups/classes should avoid mixing with other groups particularly indoors.

2. SNA should support the smallest number of pupils that is practical (a pod of pupils) and should move between pods as little as is practical to do so recognising that flexibility is sometime essential to manage absence due to leave or illness.

3. If movement between pods/classes is necessary SNAs should move between the least possible number of pods/classes on any given day.

4. If members of discrete pods/classes assemble in one area for meals or other activities maintain as much distance as is practical between the pods/classes and manage entry and exit to reduce interaction between members of different pods/classes as much as is practical.

Promoting Key-Behaviours that Reduces risk of Person to Person Spread

1. Promote hand hygiene for staff and pupils particularly on boarding a bus if there is shared transport, on arrival at the school/centre each day, prior to departure, before meals and after any contact with the pupil that is likely to have resulted in contact with oral or nasal fluid.

2. There should be ready access to hand sanitiser in all educational settings with due regard in relation to placement to avoid the risk of ingestion by pupils. Please note also that alcohol based hand rub is flammable and needs to be kept away from naked flame.

4. Providing SNAs with personal pocket size dispensers of alcohol hand gel may be useful

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particularly if wall mounted dispensers are not a safe option in a particular context and also for use during outdoor activities.

4. Promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette to the greatest extent possible.
5. Support in performing hand hygiene should be provided to pupils who need assistance.
6. Limit sharing of items between members of the pod in so far as is practical especially with respect to items that pupils may put in their mouth.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. Personal protective equipment in the setting of COVID refers to items that are used to reduce the risk of infection in particular settings.
2. PPE can be of value as an addition to all the other measures outlined here to reduce the risk of infection for SNAs.
3. As with all children, pupils with additional care needs should not be required to wear a face covering if they are under 13 years of age. Those who choose to wear a face covering may do so.
4. Pupils with additional care needs who are 13 years or older should not be required to wear a face covering if the face covering causes distress or is a barrier to their education and care needs.
5. In this context and in association with other measures specified the use of a face covering should be routine for SNAs in accordance with Government guidance.
6. When SNAs are within 2m of a pupil and to whom they are delivering personal care or attention for a period of time the face covering should normally be a surgical mask. If surgical mask are not available a cloth face covering should be used. If for any reason use of a surgical mask or cloth face covering is not practical for any reason, they should use a visor of a quality suitable for use in a healthcare setting however HPSC advice is that a visor does not provide protection equivalent to a mask.
7. Mask and visors should be donned and doffed and disposed of as demonstrated in videos available at;

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/videoresources/non-clinicalstaffcovid-19videoresources/>.

Masks should be removed and disposed of if they are wet or damaged. Masks should

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be removed and disposed of if going on a break or visiting the toilet.

8. Gloves and aprons should not be used routinely in the educational setting.
9. If providing care that involves specific risk of exposure to blood or body fluids (oral fluids, faeces, urine) use of gloves and a disposable plastic apron is appropriate. These must be removed and disposed of safely and hand hygiene performed after caring for each individual. Note with respect to faeces and urine the risk of infection is related to other infectious organisms rather than COVID-19.
10. Hand hygiene should be performed before donning and after removing gloves.
11. If providing care that involves a risk of splashing of body fluids a visor is required to protect the eyes from splashing even if already wearing a surgical mask.
12. Used PPE is generally discarded directly into domestic waste.
13. PPE used when attending to a person with suspected COVID-19 while waiting for collection can be placed in a separate plastic bag, which is then placed in domestic waste.

Environment and cleaning

1. The educational environment should provide discrete rooms for each group to the greatest degree practical and be as spacious as is practical with as much natural ventilation as practical.
2. Surfaces should be easy to clean.
3. Outdoor activity is associated with lower risk and should be encouraged where appropriate and weather permits.
4. The highest practical standards of general hygiene should be maintained.
5. The floors, tables, chairs and other items should be easily cleanable and cleaned at least daily.
6. Cleaning is generally with water and detergent or detergent wipes. If disinfection is required in specific circumstances then this is always in addition to and never instead of cleaning.

Reducing the Impact of COVID-19 Infection

It is likely that COVID-19 infection will impact on some pupils and SNAs during the coming school year as a result of infection acquired in everyday life or in the educational setting. The

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likelihood of suffering serious harm as a result of COVID-19 infection depends on the age and general health of the person when they became infected and on access to healthcare if they need it.

1. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle (exercise, nutrition, avoiding exposure to smoke) and good care of any existing medical conditions improves the likelihood of making a good recovery from COVID-19.
2. Early access to appropriate medical care, if required, is important in recovery from COVID-19. All pupils and school staffs should be registered with a GP to provide care if required.