



St. Anne's National School
Scoil Áine Naofa

Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare.

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Covid-19 School Response Plan

St Anne's NS, Ardclough

September 2020

Updated February 2021

Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in St Anne's School

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for St Anne's School to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*', and the revised '*Work Safely Protocol*' (Jan 2021), the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff will undertake also change. This plan is updated in February 2021 in line with DES recommendations.

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

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, and Work Safely Protocol' (Jan 2021), the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. **COVID-19 School Policy**
2. **Planning and Preparing for Return to School** – see also separate Logistics Plan
 - a. **School Building**
 - b. **Signage**
3. **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
4. **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
5. **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**- separate document
6. **General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
7. **Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19**
8. **Control Measures**
 - a. **Return to Work Form**- separate document
 - b. **Induction Training**
 - c. **Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**
 - d. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
 - e. **Wearing of Gloves**
 - f. **Cleaning**
 - g. **Access to the School Building / Contact Log**
 - h. **First Aid / Emergency Procedure**
9. **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
10. **Staff Duties**
11. **Covid-related absence management**
12. **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The assistance and co-operation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

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

1. St Anne's COVID-19 Policy

St Anne's COVID-19 policy, which is set out in the statement below, outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and is being brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

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

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

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

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

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

School Buildings have been checked regarding heating, water and waste equipment and services; adaptations to classrooms has been made including removal of additional furniture and organisation of desks in line with DES classroom layout guidelines. Appropriate equipment and furniture has been purchased and additional materials may be identified on return to school

Signage

Signage will be displayed outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and outlining how to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Full Logistics Plan is attached

3. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (School) [RTW(s)]** form (updated form Feb 2021); this has been forwarded to all staff by Principal. It will be completed **3 days** prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace (August 26th 2020). Staff will be advised to confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays

Staff will be reminded to review the Induction training information from the Department of Education from Sept 2020 and Information Notes from DES

4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

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

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

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

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

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

Name(s) of Lead Worker representative:	Contact details
Nora Burke	087-9443018
Lynne Buckley	087-2198456

All staff, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment

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

We will review existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan and document same. **A specific Covid Risk Assessment is attached**

6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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

In St Anne's we will implement the following measures:

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

Additional Feb 2021

Infection Prevention Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

- Advise 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
- Advise staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- 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;

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

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

St Anne's will arrange for HSE and DES advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

7. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

At St Anne's we will adhere to advice to:

a. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitiser (when hands are clean). They will be available at entry and exit points (wall mounted) and in each classroom (teacher assigns). Hand washing routines will be set up in each classroom

b. Wash Hands Frequently

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

St Anne's will follow HSE advice on how to wash your hands at:

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

Feb 2021- staff will be advised to wash/use sanitiser

- When entering and exiting vehicles
- When entering and exiting school buildings

c. Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth

Children and staff will be encouraged not to touch many surfaces and to avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.

d. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace. St Anne's takes advice on distancing for children and adults and will implement such advice.

- See note on classroom layout, yard duty, entrance and exit procedures and staff breaks

e. Practice respiratory hygiene

All will be advised to follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

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

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

We follow general advice to:

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

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

And not to

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.
- Ventilation – We adopt and advise staff of the Department guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice ‘Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools’ The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather

f. People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable):

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

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE.

Contact has been made with all staff re informing the Principal of same (Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk); Principal will follow guidelines on employing sub to cover and to assign home-based work if applicable

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

8. Control Measures

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school.

These control measures are outlined in this document.

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

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

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

The following control measures have been put in place:

a. Return to Work Form

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

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

b. Induction Training

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

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

All advised to review before return to work in Feb/March 2021

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

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

c. Induction Training for Return to School

Induction training material has been forwarded from the DES and sent to all staff to complete. A form indicating that this has been completed has been received from each staff member

d. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

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

Guidance documentation and Information posters will be available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

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

e. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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

Such include roles where:

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

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

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

The use of a face covering will conceal facial expression and can make communication difficult and as such may not be practical in a school setting. However, the wearing of a visor as an alternative to a facial covering may be considered where there is a concern that physical distancing cannot be maintained, there will be prolonged close contact and/or that exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets is likely.

f. Wearing of Gloves:

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. Gloves may be worn for the purpose of administering first aid or in other situations as deemed necessary

g. Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made. A full cleaning spec has been discussed with AFM, Cleaning Contractor and a **Cleaning Plan is attached**

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

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day. There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

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

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

h. Access to the school building /contact log

Access to the school facility will be in line with agreed school procedures. **A Contact Tracing Log** is kept at the Main Office. A log of staff and students contacts is maintained. A new log in system for staff is in place which eliminates need for all to do a physical sign in

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

i. First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in St Anne's.

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

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

9. Dealing with a Suspected Case- see attached sheet

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.- Principal

10. Staff Duties

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhering to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. The co-operation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play
- Co-ordinating and working with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained
- Making themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitoring their own wellbeing
- Self-isolating and contacting their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19
- Not returning or attending school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
Up-dated Feb 2021: Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
 - Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
 - Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health
- Adhering to the procedure outlined above if they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility,
- Completing the RTW form before they return to work
- Informing the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- Completing Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school
- Being aware of, and adhering to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- Keeping informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and complying with same.

11. Covid related absence management

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES, per Circular 49/2020

12. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as

organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal.

13. Logistical and Operational Measures

The principal, in conjunction with the staff, has put in place a set of operation and logistical measures to support the practical implementation of the Response Plan.

A FULL OUTLINE OF the following is available in appendices:

- Logistics plan (including entry/exit plans)
- Logistics plan for staff
- Yard duty schedules
- Cleaning schedules
- RTW form
- Procedures for visitors
- Procedures when there is an outbreak

This plan has been discussed by the Board on August 24th and ratified by the Board of Management on September 28th 2020

Updated version brought to Board meeting Feb 8th 2021

_____ Chairperson

_____ Principal