**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 two groups with each group having different break times and lunch times.
* Groups will be constituted of the Junior classroom (junior infants – 2nd class) and the senior classroom (3rd – 6th class).
* The junior classroom will have a break from 10:50 – 11:00 and lunchtime from 12:30 – 1:00. The senior classroom will have breaktime from 11:00 - 11:10 and lunchtime from 1:00 – 1:30.
* Within each class from 3rd to 6th, the children will be seated at individual tables to facilitate social distancing. The two class groupings will swap classrooms for the 2020-21 and the 2021-22 academic years.
* Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and in all class and support rooms

**School Transport**

* Children are not to use school transport if they are displaying symptoms.
* The pupils should maintain physical distancing while waiting for transport.
* They will always sit in pre-assigned seating and next to a sibling or child from their class group (this should be the same child at all times).
* They will be required to use hand sanitiser on boarding and exiting the bus.
* They are asked to observe respiratory etiquette at all times while waiting for and on-board     transport services.
* The pupils are expected to disembark the bus one by one in an orderly fashion and to observe social distancing when they enter the school building.

**Arrival at school**

* We ask for co-operation with arrival times as it will mean that the numbers congregating in the entrance hall at any one time will be minimised. Please keep your children in your car until the previous family has entered the building to avoid the pupils congregating in the entrance hall.
* The senior pupils should enter the school through the back door. The junior pupils should enter the school through the front door.
* No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building.
* Messages for teachers can be sent by email, in their homework journals or by phoning the school office.
* Staff and pupils should sanitise their hands as they enter the building.

**End of School Day**

* Pupils and staff members should sanitise their hands as they exit the building.
* Adults, who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should wait in their cars where possible.
* Infant parents should wait outside for their children and be mindful of observing social distancing.

**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

* When the adult arrives at the school, they should ring the doorbell at the front door of the school to alert the staff that they have arrived
* The child will be brought to the front door to the adult by a member of staff
* The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out
* No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

# Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

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 which will be implemented:

* Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
* The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area (the office) by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times. There will be a face mask, tissues, a bin, hand sanitizer, thermometer and a mat to lie on in the isolation room.
* A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
* An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
* The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
* The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided
* If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
* If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child potentially has Covid-19.
* Arrangements will be made 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.

**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 household 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 with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
* Children who are generally unwell. The symptoms of Covid-19 are a high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more, a new cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste, fatigue, aches or pains, other uncommon symptoms of Covid-19, such as sore throat, headaches, diarrhoea, runny or stuff nose or feeling sick or vomiting.

**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 suggest activities to support the child’s learning at home and these will be shared with parents. It is the parents’ responsibility to ensure that the completed schoolwork is uploaded to seesaw or e-mailed to the school.

**Facemasks**

All students from 3rd class to 6th class are required to wear a facemask indoors in school unless they are exempt. If a child is exempt, a medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school on behalf of, any person (pupil) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:

* any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions
* any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
* any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example pupils with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

**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 of children in the class who are sitting nearby will be notified
* Public health advice will be sought and followed

**Personal Equipment**

* In so far as possible, it is requested that children 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 the junior classroom, the school will provide a container which will hold each child’s scissors, pritt stick, paint brush, playdough, pencils, crayons, etc.

**Shared Equipment**

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

**Yards**

Each bubble / classroom will have access to the yard during their allotted break times.

Yards will be supervised by class teachers, learning support teachers and SNA’s working within those bubbles. They amount of PE equipment available to the pupils will be limited so that it is not shared with the other classroom and can be cleaned.

**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.
* Where children from 3rd to 6th Class receive support in the SET room, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
* The tables and chairs in the SET room will be wiped clean in between different groups attending
* SNAs and Special Education Teachers will wear medical grade face masks when working in close proximity to pupils.

**PPE**

Staff will wear facemasks at all times. Medical grade facemasks have been provided by the BOM.

The public health advice is that children do not have to wear masks at school. Parents may, however, request that their children wear a mask.

**Ventilation**

The classroom windows will remain partially open during the school day. They will be fully opened at breaktime and at the end of the school day. The internal doors will be kept open to reduce contact with surfaces. Singing will only take place outside. Co2 monitors have been placed in each of the classrooms.

**Kitchenette**

The pupils will not have access to the microwave and kitchen utensils for this academic year.

**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. The principal will be on administration leave for one day per week. The BOM will employ one substitute who will cover all of the administration leave.

**PE**

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. If the PE hall is being used by class groupings, common touch points should be cleaned at intervals throughout the school day.

**Extra-curricular Activities**

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities will be explored. All visitors to the school will be required to follow social distancing guidelines and to wear PPE where appropriate. There will be no external teachers during level five restrictions.

**Toilets**

Each classroom will be designated certain toilet cubicles to use. There will only be paper towels and liquid soap in the bathrooms.