



## Covid 19 Response Plan

August 2021

### 1. Context

This update is based on Version 4 of the Covid 19 Response Plan issued by the Department of Education to primary and special schools: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e1141-covid-19-response-plan-for-the-safe-and-sustainable-operation-of-primary-and-special-schools/>

This plan should be read in conjunction with protocols outlined in *Re-Opening DSP Covid 19 Response Plan 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021* and *Covid 19 School Plan 2021 -2022 Drop Off Pick Up and Breaktimes* available on Policies page of the school website: <https://www.dspns.ie/policies/>

### 2. Safe Operation of School

The Board of Management has put procedures in place to ensure in so far as possible safety of children, staff and essential visitors e.g. made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout if necessary to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing. Refer to government publication for details: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e1141-covid-19-response-plan-for-the-safe-and-sustainable-operation-of-primary-and-special-schools/>

### 3. Access to School

Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to **essential purposes** and limited to those who have obtained **prior approval from the principal**.

## 4. Infection Prevention Control Measures

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements. The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene, follow respiratory etiquette and increase ventilation.

- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by **prior arrangement** and should be received at a specific contact point;
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

### **Children must not be sent to school if they are unwell.**

Situation: A child with a runny nose or other **minor signs of illness and 'off-form'**, no fever of 38°C, no cough, no difficulty breathing and no contact with an ill person or recent travel to another country –

Action: **keep your child home from school or childcare for 48 hours**. Monitor your child's illness for any signs of getting worse, or for any new signs of illness. If their illness is not worsening, and there are no new signs of illness AND your child doesn't need paracetamol or ibuprofen to feel better, your child can return to school or childcare. (Reference Section 9 Isolation Quick Guide: [Isolation quick guide under 13s.pdf \(hpsc.ie\)](https://www.hpsc.ie/13s/isolation-quick-guide))

Consequence: if a child is kept home or sent home from school with minor signs of illness, they should stay home for 48 hours.

### **4.1 Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

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

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of [cold](#) and [flu](#).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you have any common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), [self-isolate](#) (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need [a free COVID-19 test](#).

## **4.2 Respiratory and Hand Hygiene**

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 and safely into a nearby bin.

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

### **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;
- When they cough or sneeze.

## **4.3 Physical Distancing**

Where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

- Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.

- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) should be discouraged.
- Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource.
- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth).
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

## **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school**

### ***School drop off/collection***

Encourage physical distancing of 2m where possible.

Walking/cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible.

Maintain a distance of 2m between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff.

**Avoid congregation of people at the school gates** where physical distancing may not be respected.

**Avoid** congregation of people at **school neighbours' gates and walls**.

## **Ventilation**

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 Department of Education (DE) has stated the first batch delivery of CO2 monitors will start week commencing 23rd August. The DE has stated the second batch will be delivered early September, with schools due to receive their full allocation of monitors by mid-September. The DSP Board of Management has no control of the time frame in which CO2 monitors are delivered.

## **Face Coverings/Masks**

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face coverings coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

All staff, parent/guardians and essential visitors wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

## **5. Impact of Covid 19 on certain school activities**

### *Choir/Music Performance*

Children face forward in one direction in class i.e. children do not sing across the table. Ensure room is well ventilated.

Shared Sports Equipment – Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

**Toys must not be brought from home to school or vice versa.**

Junior Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> class: children will have individual folders to store their pencils, crayons etc.

3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> classes” children should have a separate set of pens, pencils etc. for home and school. The school set will be kept in school.

## **6. Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

- All staff are required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.
- Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.) where facilities allow or place in dishwasher in staffroom immediately after use. Used mugs, cutlery etc. should be placed in dishwasher daily i.e. do not leave used mugs/cutlery in small kitchen or on draining board in classrooms or staffroom

## **7. 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. The cooperation 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.

## **8. School Community Responsibilities**

All members of DSP school community have a responsibility to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all DSP

community is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school.

#### **9. Park and Walk – Keep School Gates Safe**

Continue the good habits developed last year by **parking at a distance from school gates** and encouraging children to walk to the gates. Please alert all grandparents, childminders, after-school groups of our Traffic Safety Plan – **keep school gates and neighbours' gates safe. Do not congregate at school gates or neighbours' gates/walls.**