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Covid-19 Policy

Introduction

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Clondrohid National School.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', 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).

It is important that the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

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, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and reopening 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**
- 3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**

4. **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
5. **General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
6. **Control Measures**
7. **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
8. **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
9. **Staff Duties**
10. **Covid related Absence Management**
11. **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The assistance and cooperation 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.

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. Clondrohid National School COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy 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 brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Clondrohid National School 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 COVID19 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 in relation to summer provision
- 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) Jane O' Keeffe and Assistant Lead Worker Representative Eileen O' Shea.

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 must 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.

Signage

Schools are required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The Board of Management has erected proper Covid 19 signage all around the school. Pupils, parents and staff are asked to follow the directions carefully.

Child friendly Covid 19 signage will also be displayed prominently all around the school and in classrooms

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically or from the Principal. A hard copy is attached also at Appendix 1.

A RTW form should only be completed at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace. On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide: details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

Note: Induction Training for staff is available for all schools and staff.

3. 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) 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:

Lead Worker Representative: Jane O' Keeffe

Assistant Lead Representative: Eileen O' Shea

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.

4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A comprehensive risk assessment has been carried out to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in Clondrohid National School.

5. 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.

This can be achieved through 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 should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.

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/>

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Clondrohid National School will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner. This will be done through Aladdin and through our website.

The Department has been working closely with the HSE and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) to develop health advice which has been tailored to the needs of schools in order to support schools in planning for reopening in autumn.

The advice will continue to be updated in line with public health advice generally and will inform the development of more detailed guidance for schools by the Department of Education.

<https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/interim-recommendations-for-the-reopening-of-schools-and-educational-facilities.pdf>

Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

Wash your hands frequently

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. Follow the HSE guidelines on hand washing:

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of hand sanitisers (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers have been deployed in Clondrohid National school's settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities.

They will be available in the following areas

- All entry/exit points of the school
- Each classroom
- Hall
- Outside Secretary's office
- Staff Room
- Resource Rooms (all)

Physical distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace.

Guidance on the physical distancing requirements will be informed by public health advice for schools. Interim public health advice has been received from the (Health Protection Surveillance Centre) HPSC and is available at this link as outlined above.

Clondrohid National School will follow all Guidelines issued by the Department of Education and NPHE and will endeavour to implement them to the best of our ability.

Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, 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, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your 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.

Do

- 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.

Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

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 immunosuppressant 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 immunosuppressant therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. 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. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills.

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.

6. 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 shall 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:

i. Return to Work Form

Staff will be required to complete a RTW form at least 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.

ii. 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

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.

Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year has been developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.

iii. 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.

Hand washing facilities and/or automatic hand sanitisers will be available at multiple locations within the school facility and will be available in each classroom. They will also be available in the school corridors and staffroom.

Clondrohid National School has also purchased PPE Equipment in addition to three Infra-Red Thermometers in the case of a child presenting with a temperature.

iv. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In line with the most recent public health recommendations a letter has been issued to schools advising the use of face coverings for teachers and staff when a distance of 2m cannot be maintained in a primary school.

This includes:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with those who are in the very high risk category

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated as appropriate in line with advice from the HPSC.

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.

v. 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 will be worn by staff dealing with intimate care needs of a child or when dealing with suspected cases of Covid-19.

vi. Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, door handles and kitchen area.

Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. 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.

vii Access to the school building /contact log

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

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. The school should maintain a log of staff and students contacts.

viii First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Clondrohid National School. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, the school will call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident.

7. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19 or if there is someone in the household with suspected or known to have COVID-19

The following outlines how Clondrohid National School will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

Designated Isolation Area 1- Foherish (meeting room downstairs)

Designated Isolation Area 2- School Library (upstairs)

Staff members/pupils displaying symptoms

The following outlines how Clondrohid National School will deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

- A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building (Foherish-meeting room downstairs). The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases has been put in place (Library-upstairs). The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

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

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately;
- The person will be isolated and accompanied by a staff member to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping 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;

- When it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask.
- A mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- It will be assessed 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-isolation at home;
- The person presenting with symptoms will be facilitated to remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitated when calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice will 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, they will be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, 999 or 112 will be contacted and informed that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect;
- An assessment of the incident will be carried out which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- 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 will be followed and **staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.**

Signed: _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____



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Pre –Return to Work Form Re Covid-19

In order for the Board of Management of Clondrohid National School to implement the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Measures to minimise risk to workers before returning to work, the following prereturn to work form should be completed by both employers and workers.

The questionnaire must be completed by all staff at least 3 days in advance of returning to work. If you answer yes to any of the questions below you must seek medical advice before returning to work.

1. Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days? Yes/No _____
2. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days? Yes/No _____
3. Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)? Yes/No _____
4. Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time? Yes/No _____
5. Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time? Yes/No _____
6. Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high risk group? Yes/No _____ If yes, please liaise with Principal re return to work and follow the agreed DES arrangements for very high risk groups.

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test.

Please note: The organisation is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

