



## Shanagolden National School

### COVID -19 Response Plan

#### Underlying Principles

Shanagolden National 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.

It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection from COVID-19. 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 this plan can be implemented.

#### Preparing for Return to School

The following processes have been put in place by the staff and Board of Management of Shanagolden N.S following the publication of the Department of Education document- *COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools*

- Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates;
- Arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required;
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- Identified a Lead Worker representative and a Deputy Lead Worker
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout if necessary to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment
- Made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school
- Reviewed the school buildings for any safety risks

## 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, taste or distortion of taste

## Control Measures

All staff, pupils, parents, 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 to assist with the implementation of the Shanagolden N.S Covid -19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

- Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have prior approval from the Principal. A contact log will be maintained to ensure that accurate contact tracing can be applied where necessary
- Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning in school. Physical distancing falls into two categories;
  - increasing separation
  - decreasing interaction

Classes will operate within a bubble system. The aim of the system within the school is that each class grouping/bubble will only mix with their own bubble from arrival to school until departure, thereby reducing the risk of infection.

Ms O' Donoghue's Juniors/Seniors are one bubble.

Ms Cawley's 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> class are another bubble.

Ms.Doyle's 3<sup>rd</sup> class, Mrs. O' Connell's 4<sup>th</sup> class and Mr. Hennessy's 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class will be three separate bubbles and when in class, will be divided into smaller groups called pods. Each pod will be 1 metre distance from the next pod. Sharing of educational materials/personal items between pods will be avoided.

Staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m.They should take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting/crouching down in class. It is recognised that this may not always be possible or appropriate in particular circumstances.

- Children will be encouraged to follow good respiratory hygiene and avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact. Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser located throughout the school when hands look clean. Children will be explicitly taught these techniques by their class teacher following HSE guidelines. Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings) will be discouraged.

- Interaction will be limited on arrival. Juniors, seniors, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes enter and exit the school using the front door. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes enter the school by turning right and walking along the front of the school to enter through their class doors at the rear.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and in all class and support rooms. Hand sanitiser should only be applied to clean hands. Hands that do not look clean need to be washed thoroughly before sanitising. Children will be taught correct hand hygiene etiquette in line with HSE guidelines by their class teacher. Children 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

#### **Arrival at school**

- The school will open to receive pupils at 9.10a.m. Please remain outside the school gates observing a 2m social distance if arriving before this time. Congregating at any one time needs to be avoided and we ask for cooperation in this regard.
- Bus children are asked to follow Bus Eireann guidelines while traveling on the school bus. They will enter and leave the school according to their assigned class level route as outlined above.
- Children should apply hand sanitiser to hands that look clean on entry. If hands do not look clean they should be washed with soap and water before sanitising.
- When doors are opened the children will be invited to enter the building through their designated entrance point.
- Children will be guided by their teacher to areas to store coats, lunchboxes etc. mindful of the need to physical distance during this process.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by email or by phoning the school office.

#### **End of School Day**

- Adults who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should wait outside the school gates. Children from juniors to 2<sup>nd</sup> will be accompanied by their teacher to the gate and into the care of their adult for collection. Teachers from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class will accompany their class, grouped in their pods, to the school gate.

#### **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 either phone the office on 069 60215 or use the bell at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

### **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**

Pupils should not attend Shanagolden National School if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route 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.
- 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.
- 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 is a Covid-19 suspect.
- 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.

### **Cleaning in School**

The Department of Education has provided funding to facilitate the school to be cleaned at least once per day. Additional cleaning throughout the day will focus on frequently touched surfaces. HSE cleaning guidelines will be followed when cleaning/disinfecting a room where a pupil/ staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present.

### **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 any of the following symptoms- A temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more, a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath or an existing breathing condition that has become worse, sore throat, headaches or diarrhoea.
- Children who have been in close 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 who have been in contact with a person who has 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 have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell

### **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 share activities to support the child's learning at home with parents.

### **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, public health advice will be sought and followed.

### **Personal Equipment**

- In so far as possible, it is requested that all children 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.

### **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.

### **Playground**

Children will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities. If hands do not look clean they need to be washed before applying hand sanitiser.

For their breaks, the children will exit to the yard through their designated exit points. The playground will be divided into 5 zones including the soft surface yard and the all-weather pitch. Each bubble will play in their designated zone for that break ensuring that social distance is maintained between other bubbles.

Yards will be supervised by a teacher and 3 SNA's.

### **Ventilation**

The Department has published 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. The Department has also published guidance

regarding on how these practical steps measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors which are to be supplied to all schools.

### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

### **PPE**

Staff including teachers, who cannot maintain a 2m distance from students or other staff will be required to wear face coverings.

Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks.

Children will not be required to wear face coverings.

### **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.

### **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 in Shanagolden National School 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. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- New staff must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- Follow the HSE guidance if they are identified as a close contact.

- 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.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- 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 as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

This plan has been developed to help contain the spread of COVID-19. Feedback from staff, students and parents on any concerns, issues or suggestions is encouraged.

Signed – Canon O' Keefe

Date 19/8/'21

Chairperson Shanagolden Board of Management