

St Mary's Primary School



Positive Behaviour Policy COVID-19

Addendum:

Guidance and Addendum

Date Ratified by Board of Governors:

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COVID-19: Addendum to Positive Behaviour Policy

Rationale underpinning the Positive Behaviour Policy COVID-19 Addendum Guidance and Template

This addendum follows the guidance provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland and is to stand in conjunction with our existing policy. Therefore, the principles as set out in St Mary's Primary School Positive Behaviour Policy remain and should continue to be followed. This addendum outlines the expectations of St Mary's Primary School in response to the COVID-19 guidance and the need for the whole school community to adjust to this guidance upon returning to school. This guidance will describe how the school community will be supported to adhere to the new procedures and routines outlined in the addendum.

The return to school will see some significant changes to the structure of the school day, daily routines and social and behavioural norms. There is an awareness that COVID-19 has potentially impacted significantly on the mental health and wellbeing of staff, pupils and their family members due to the experiences that they may have had during the lockdown period. To ensure that our school continues to be a calm, nurturing and supportive learning environment, it is essential that new routines and expectations are established for the safety of the whole school community.

Addendum Guiding Principles – A Trauma Informed Approach

The whole school strives to uphold the following guiding principles within our approach as we adjust and return to school;

- **Clear communication will support and build confidence and re-establish a sense of familiarity –** We have put appropriate and effective measures in place for communicating and involving pupils regarding their expected behaviour upon returning to school. These will include, online materials, social stories and other means. Communication will be tailored to be age-appropriate and take account of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- **Expectations for behaviour will be clear -** We will teach pupils that they have a responsibility to keep themselves and others safe, physically and emotionally. We will apply our expectations consistently and fairly so that pupils know the consequences of their behaviours and support will be provided to ensure all pupils are able to meet these expectations.
- **Routines and behaviours will be taught -** Routines and expectations for behaviour will be taught and modelled by all members of the school community. Within our trauma informed response, primarily behaviour will be used as communication. Challenging behaviour displayed by children should be seen not as a choice, but as communication of an unmet need. The school community will strive to understand the need behind the behaviour and offer support.
- **Supporting emotional health and wellbeing -** We will seek to reconnect and rebuild relationships and focus on the emotional health and wellbeing of the school community by promoting

connection and communication, predictability and providing opportunities for movement before focussing on the academic curriculum.

- **Mutually respectful relationships are key** - Relationships, showing empathy and feeling safe will continue to be prioritised throughout the whole school community.
- **Parents/guardians will be kept fully informed** - We will continue to nurture close relationships and ensure that appropriate and effective measures are in place for communicating the new system in place around the behavioural changes expected upon return to school. The school will encourage parents/guardians to share concerns and we will respond.
- **A proactive and supportive approach** – We will adopt this approach and consider patterns of behaviour and anticipate risks, we will continue to update/implement Risk Reduction Action Plans as required, to support pupils.

Behaviour for Learning

The school will strive to celebrate the resilience of pupils in how they deal with the demands of Education Restart. It is important to continue to praise and reward the expected behaviour within school. If there are occasions when behaviours occur which are neither safe nor conducive to learning, the school community will seek to reduce tension and anxiety by actively promoting de-escalation strategies and promote positive behaviour.

To support pupils' reintegration a range of supports will be implemented consistently across the whole school, proportionately and fairly. Such supports will include;

- emotion coaching, i.e. talking with a pupil calmly about their feelings and behaviour and discussing strategies that could help, goal is to empathise, reassure and teach
- supporting pupils to assess their learning progress, gaps and requirements as a result of school closures and blended learning;
- offering pupils time to reflect and plan for better choices

New Procedures and Routines

St Mary's Primary School will uphold strict adherence and follow the guidelines as set out in the 'New School Day' documentation and adhere to advice given by PHA and Departments of Health and Education. The school will provide sensitive explanation of new rules and routines to promote reassurance and safety for all.

Our school's current arrangements will follow guidelines on the following:

- **Arrivals and Departures for school**

The school has adopted an altered routine to protect the safety of children and adults. All children will enter through the school hall between 9.00 to 9.15 am, sanitise their hands and go to their designated classroom. Primary 1-Primary 3 will leave school at 2:00pm, Primary 4-Primary 7 finish at 3:00pm.. The

school will uphold a 'one way system' children will leave through their designated exit. Adults must adhere to PHA social distancing guidelines when waiting to collect their child.

- **Social Distancing**

Signage and visual prompts have been placed around the school to remind children about the importance of social distancing. Children should follow the one-way system during all transitions. When children are inside their classroom they will be seated at an allocated desk which follows the class seating plan. Teachers will ensure that pupils, wherever possible, adhere to social distancing measures. We understand socially distancing may be more difficult for younger children, they will be encouraged wherever possible to keep a distance from peers and adults, however, we understand this may not always be possible.

- **Toilets**

When going to the toilet children will follow the one-way system. Children will attend the toilet one at a time and when they are finished they must wash their hands. Directions and reminders are provided with visual posters displayed in all toilets and sink areas throughout the school.

- **Break and Lunch Times**

Break times have previously been staggered but this year Primaries 1 – 7 will have break outside from 10.45 – 11.00 am. Each class will have a designated area for play where they are expected to remain in at all times.

During lunch time the children will have a designated seating area in the dinner hall within their class bubble. When children are finished eating they will exit to the playground through the designated exit and go to their allocated play area.

- **Hand washing and Hygiene**

Children will be expected to follow all hand washing and hygiene routines while in school. Children will wash hands /use antibacterial gel when entering school, after returning from the outside and before/ after eating.

Using age-appropriate resources children will be taught, reminded and expected to follow "catch it, bin it, kill it". When in school, if they need to cough or sneeze, they should use a tissue or crook of their arm. Children will be reminded not to touch their face, mouth, nose or eyes while at school.

- **Remote Learning**

A clear outline of the expectation for pupils during remote learning is available within the Remote Learning Pupil/ Parent Agreement. Further information is accessible within the Remote Learning Policy.

- **Personal belongings and equipment**

To protect the whole community, children will be permitted to carry a school bag with equipment and or belongings to school, these include a lunch box, labelled reusable drinking bottle, coat and plastic folder which will be used by the school for homework purposes. Children will have individual equipment which they are to take responsibility for including glue sticks, pencils etc.

- **Pupil Absence**

St. Mary's will provide remote learning in the form of online activities and/or paper booklets for pupils who cannot attend school due to being classed as 'clinically vulnerable'. Staff will make available to parents, paper copies of work taught each week. Parents should make arrangements for collection of this work. The person who collects the work should not be self-isolating nor have received a positive test result for Covid-19.

- **Behaviour Management**

The school will ensure that pupils who may require additional support to follow the expectations are supported through the use of visual cues and resources.

Teachers will adopt and put in place systems for rewarding pupils demonstrating appropriate behaviours and adhering to all rules and adjustments. In the event that a child's behaviour is deemed high risk, such as refusal to adhere to safety measures, social distancing, deliberate coughing or spitting. The following disciplinary procedures may be used;

- Conversation(s) with pupil(s) which could include a verbal warning, moving seats if logistically possible and other behaviour management strategies in line with our current behaviour policy.
- Once all appropriate behaviour management strategies have been exhausted, contact will be made with pupil's parent/carer.
- If the health and safety of other pupils and staff members are put at risk by the pupils not adhering to social distancing measures, then the parent/carer will be expected to collect the pupil and a fixed term exclusion will be applied in line with CCMS Suspension and Expulsion Guidance.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

A whole-school approach will be taken to promote emotional health and wellbeing and will involve all members of the school community actively working together in partnership to achieve this outcome through delivery of the curriculum by;

- creating an environment where pupils and staff feel safe and happy;
- providing opportunities for pupils to build self-esteem, develop confidence and cope with change;
- the use of social stories and resources to promote understanding of new rules and measures;
- supporting the development of emotional literacy and resilience to help pupils understand and find ways to promote their own health and wellbeing;
- talks/discussions;

- promoting small group work, 1:1, peer-mentoring, team building;
- providing wellbeing through appropriate programs e.g Healthy Me, Relax Kids;
- raising awareness of how and where support can be accessed

Support: Reasonable Adjustments

At certain stages in a child's or young person's school life they may struggle to access, or manage within, the typical provision offered by the school as a result of:

- Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Well-Being Needs (SBEW) and/or;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

School staff will be supported by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Mrs U McAlinden to implement the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and be guided by existing or new Individual Education Plans and Education, Health and Care Plans.

Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- preparing pupils for new routines through a school leaflet, signage and posters
- identification of a key member of staff to act as point of contact who will provide support when needed
- additional support available at break and lunch time
- adapted resources displayed through the school and made available to class teachers
- liaising with EA Support Services, e.g. Autism Advisory and Intervention Service, Psychology Service, Primary/Post-Primary Behaviour Support & Provisions
- liaising with external agencies as appropriate e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services, Health and Social Care Trust, Family Support Hub.

The school will respond to ongoing concerns in partnership with the pupil and their parent/carer by;

- reviewing and implementing support strategies and, through consultation with school staff and parent/guardian, agree a plan which is in line with Special Needs Code of Practice and the school's Special Educational Needs Policy
- if appropriate, complete a Risk Assessment. This should be drafted in consultation with staff, pupil, parent/guardian and supporting agencies to identify and target support to address the presenting needs.
- address serious health-related issues of non-adherence to COVID-19 measures, such as coughing and spitting at others.

Suspension and Expulsion:

When appropriate support has been implemented, monitored and reviewed but a pupil's SBEW continues to cause significant risk to self or others in the school community, a short period of suspension may be considered to allow time for a Risk Assessment. As part of a planned return to

school following a suspension, parents/guardians will be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal (or their representative) to agree the implementation of the RRAP. If, when all appropriate supports and guidance have been implemented and reviewed, a pupil continues to be unable to follow the safety rules, the Principal may, consider alternative arrangements to formally suspend a pupil for a fixed period or, as a last resort, move towards expulsion proceedings.

Safe handling: Use of Physical Intervention

In the present COVID-19 circumstances while it is unlikely that school staff would choose to use physical intervention, there may be times when physical intervention is deemed necessary as per Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, enabling a member of staff to prevent a pupil from:

- committing an offence;
- causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself);
- engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.

St Mary's will be guided by the above principles during COVID-19 circumstances and acting in line with the school's Safe Handling Policy, staff will:

- act in accordance with Public Health and Government guidelines on COVID-19
- focus on early intervention as a preventative measure alongside de-escalation strategies and reducing 'triggers' to manage risk
- only use physical intervention as a **last resort**, ensuring that their actions are reasonable and proportionate and in the best interests of the pupil
- continue to explore alternatives that maximise safety and minimise harm when risky behaviours occur
- maintain accurate records of physical intervention according to the school's Reasonable Force Policy
- act to maintain the care, welfare, safety and security of all members of the school community

New procedures and routines: Tracking and monitoring arrangements

The school will regularly collect data to review how effectively the new routines and procedures are being implemented and embedded, e.g. new entry and exit arrangements, one-way systems are being used, maintenance of social bubbles and staggered home times. Leadership will invite feedback from staff and pupils to inform practice and guide adjustments to procedures and routines and make improvements as appropriate.