

COVID-19: Addendum to Positive Behaviour Policy

The principles as set out in St Joseph's Primary School Positive Behaviour Policy remain and should continue to be followed. This addendum is not intended to be used as a stand-alone document and therefore should be read in conjunction with the existing policy. It sets out the expectations of St Joseph's Primary School in response to the COVID-19 guidance and the need for the whole school community to adjust to this guidance upon return to school. The new guidance will describe how the school community will be supported to adhere to the new procedures and routines outlined in the addendum.

This addendum follows the guidance provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/education-restart>

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-re-opening-school-guidance-new-school-day>

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

Clear communication will support and build their confidence and re-establish a sense of familiarity

- Appropriate and effective measures are in place for communicating and involving pupils regarding their expected behaviour upon returning to school. These will include online materials 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. Our aim is to support the school community in a trauma informed way, therefore **first and foremost behaviour will be seen as communication**. Behaviour that challenges is not seen as a choice, but as communication of an unmet need. The school community will strive to understand the function 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.

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 will be taken - we will look at patterns of behaviour and anticipate risks, we will continue to update/implement Risk Reduction Action Plans as required, to support pupils.

Behaviour for Learning

We will 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.

There are occasions when behaviours which are neither safe nor conducive to learning occur. In order to promote positive behaviour, the school community will seek to reduce tension and anxiety by actively promoting de-escalation strategies.

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

- *Key Adult, 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 time to reflect and plan for better choices*

New Procedures and Routines

- *social distancing 1m for pupils, 2m for adults, where at all possible*
- *space utilisation; Foundation/Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Classes are all in their own class bubble. Both Nursery Classes together form one bubble and utilise all outside spaces. All pupils have been made aware of movement around the school.*
- *Pupils will arrive to school from 8.45. Pupils will wash or sanitise their hands on arrival. Each class has a specific entrance and a specific exit. Arrivals and hometimes have been staggered.*
- *Induction days provided staff the opportunity to provide a sensitive explanation of new rules and routines to promote reassurance and safety for all regarding hygiene, i.e. use of toilets, handwashing and sanitising, expectations regarding sneezing/coughing, use and disposal of tissues ('catch it, bin it, kill it'), avoiding touching your mouth/nose/eyes with your hands.*

- *Pupils have been asked to bring in a sterilised pencil case/folder which will remain in school.*
- *There will be no sharing equipment in class, if anyone needs pens, pencil etc. they will be provided by the school.*
- *A water bottle and lunch box that can be easily sterilised are permitted*
- *Clear rules and sanction that have been put in place have been explained to all pupils about coughing or spitting at or towards another person*
- *There are signs/posters/visual prompts displayed throughout the school as reminders of the new safety measures*
- *Any concerns can be shared with staff*
- *There are arrangements for pupils who are 'clinically vulnerable' and learning from home*
- *Pupils who understand the expectations but struggle to follow/adhere to them - the school's current Positive Behaviour Policy will be implemented*
- *Pupils who require additional support to follow the expectations and support through the Code of Practice and Special Educational Needs Policy will be implemented and reasonable adjustments made*

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;*
- *supporting the development of emotional literacy and resilience to help pupils understand and find ways to promote their own health and wellbeing;*
- *lesson planning;*
- *talks/discussions;*
- *providing wellbeing through providing therapeutic support;*
- *raising awareness of how and where support can be accessed*
- *developing supportive networks and promoting self-care.*

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 (SENCO) to implement the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and be guided by existing/new Individual Education Plans/Education, Health and Care Plans.

Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- *preparing pupils for new routines, this could include a visit to the school/video/visuals/leaflet etc.*
- *identification of a key member of staff to act as point of contact who will provide support when needed*
- *additional support at break and lunch time*
- *adapted resources*
- *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.*

Responding to ongoing concerns together with the pupil:

- review, amend and implement 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 Management Plan will be developed
- address serious health-related issues of non-adherence to COVID-19 measures, such as coughing and spitting at others through the implementation of a RAMP

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 and the development of an appropriate RAMP. 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 RAMP. 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

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/suspensions-and-expulsions>

Note, suspension should therefore be considered only after:

2.1a period of indiscipline

The school must maintain a written record of events and of the interventions of teachers, contacts with parent / guardian and any requests for external support from the EA's Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service or other applicable EA services; and / or

2.2a serious incident of indiscipline

The school must have investigated and documented the incident. The investigation should include an opportunity for the pupil to be interviewed and for his or her version of events to be given before any decision to suspend is made. Consideration should be given to the necessity of a parent / guardian being present at an interview particularly if the child is of primary school age.

Extract from Approved EA Scheme: <https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/school-document/2015-0513-approved-ea-scheme-for-the-suspension-and-expulsion-of>

NB. There is a statutory requirement for schools to arrange for the provision of suitable education for registered pupils of the school when they are suspended, regardless of the length of suspension or reason for the sanction.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201125-education-suspended-pupils>

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: a. committing an offence; b. causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or c. 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. See the Regional Policy Framework on the Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/regional-policy-framework-use-reasonable-forcesafehandling>

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

- *be aware of possible risk of infection if they physically intervene, contrasted with the risk of not intervening*
- *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/Safe Handling 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

Regularly collect data to review how effectively the new routines and procedures are being implemented and embedded, e.g. new entry and exit arrangements, RAMPs are working effectively, maintenance of social bubbles.

Invite regular feedback from staff and pupils (School Council) to inform practice and guide adjustments to procedures and routines and make improvements as appropriate.