

Covid Response Plan

Castletown Girls' School, Dundalk, Co. Louth

Introduction:

This Covid – 19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (B.O.M.) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid – 19 in Castletown Girls’ School.

The Covid 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 re-opening 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**
 - a. School Building**
 - b. Signage**
- 3. Procedures for Returning to Work (RTW)**
- 4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
- 5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
- 6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
 - a. Wash your hands Frequently**
 - b. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser**
 - c. Avoiding Touching your Eyes, Nose and Mouth**
 - d. Physical Distancing**
 - e. Practice Respiratory Hygiene**
 - f. Do**
 - g. Do Not**

- h. People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)**
- 7. Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid -19**
- 8. Control Measures**
 - a. Return to Work Form**
 - b. Induction Training**
 - c. Induction Training – Online Video**
 - d. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**
 - e. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
 - f. Wearing of Gloves**
 - g. Cleaning**
 - h. Access to the School Building/ Contact Log**
 - i. First Aid/ Emergency Procedure**
- 9. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid – 19**
- 10. Staff Duties**
- 11. Covid related absence management**
- 12. 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. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify the same.

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;

2. Castletown Girls' 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

Castletown Girls' 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 COVID- 19 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) _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

3. 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.

a. School Buildings

Before re-opening schools in the new school year schools are reminded to check the following:

- Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;

- Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
- Have bin collections and other essential services resumed

b. Signage

Schools will be required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The following is a link to the dedicated area of the Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC) website where there are a number of posters, including those appropriate for primary school pupils, located. Irish versions are also available here

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/>

Schools can download the posters and display in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets. Schools do not need to do this now as the posters may be updated during the summer and further information will issue on signage closer to planned reopening.

4. 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 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 who are new to the school 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 will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.

5. 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.

Note: The process for appointment of the Lead Worker representative in schools will be agreed centrally between the Department of Education and Skills and the education

partners. That process, once agreed, will be circulated to all schools in advance of the re-opening of schools.

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:	Contact Details:
Lisa Murphy	Available in school office 0429334574
Deputy Lead Worker Representatives:	
Diarmuid Murphy Rose Mc Coy	Available in school office 0429334574

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.

6. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A template risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings is attached at *Appendix 2*.

It is important that schools review their emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school’s COVID-19 Summer Provision Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures should be documented. Schools should also review their existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school’s current risk assessments should also be documented.

7. 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:

Common symptoms of Covid 19 include:

- A fever (High temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- A new Cough – that can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste- this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste differently to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and pains

Other uncommon symptoms of Covid 19 include:

- Sore throat
- Headaches
- Runny or stuffy noses
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Diarrhoea

For complete list of symptoms please refer to the HSE website. Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE website is advised.

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.

Castletown Girls' School will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

8. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

a. 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>

b. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

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

Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school 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 at entry and exit points and in each classroom.

c. Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

d. Physical Distancing

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

Two metres distance is recommended between adults. A teacher's desk should be at least one metre away from students' desks but preferably two metres. Where a class are divided into pods there should be at least one metre between each pod.

It is now a requirement for a staff member to wear a face covering where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance from another adult or child.

e. 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 and also at the end of the 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 can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) monitors.

f. 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.

f. 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.

g. 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.

h. 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:

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have Down Syndrome

- have [cancer](#) and are being treated with chemotherapy or similar drugs other than hormone therapy
- have lung or head and neck cancer and are having radical surgery or radiotherapy
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer or head and neck cancer
- are having certain complex cancer surgery, for example, surgery for lung cancer, head and neck cancer or oesophageal cancer
- have advanced cancer or cancer that has spread to another part of the body
- are on dialysis or have end-stage [kidney disease](#) and an eGFR less than 15
- have a condition affecting the brains or nerves that has significantly affected your ability to breathe, meaning you require non-invasive ventilation (such as motor neurone disease or spinal muscular atrophy)
- have [unstable or severe cystic fibrosis](#), including people waiting for a transplant
- have severe respiratory conditions including [Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency](#), [severe asthma](#), pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and [severe COPD](#)
- have uncontrolled diabetes
- have had an organ transplant or are waiting for a transplant
- have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the last 12 months, or are waiting for a transplant
- have a rare condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as APECED or errors in the interferon pathway)
- sickle cell disease
- have been treated with drugs such as Rituximab, Cyclophosphamide, Alemtuzumab, Cladribine or Ocrelizumab in the last 6 months
- have certain inherited metabolic disorders (such as Maple Syrup Urine Disease)
- have [obesity](#) with a body mass index (BMI) greater than 40

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.

9. 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:

- Hand sanitisers will be available at all entry and exit points to the school and in classrooms.
- Contact tracing logs will be kept.
- **Opening times:** Children to be dropped at the front (2nd, 5th and 6th) and side gates (all other classes) by parents between 9.10 and 9.20. Gates will be opened and supervised at 9.10 by a staff member. No parents are permitted in the school premises or on the yard. Children will be dropped at the gate and walk in alone. Children will walk straight to their class where a teacher will be present to supervise. Doors will close at 9.30. Children should not be late. Any child who arrives after 9.30 must remain at the front gate with a parent and parents should ring the office. 0429334574.
- **Junior and Senior Infants:** Infants will take one break and go home at 1.30pm to avoid congestion and ensure appropriate social distancing at lunch time for the remaining classes. Twenty minutes break time will be given mid morning, ten minutes eating time and ten minutes play time. Active breaks will be taken throughout the day. This will be supervised by a teacher and SNA.
- **Lunchtime and supervision:** Classes are a bubble. Yard to be segregated into zones which are socially distanced from other groups. Normal break and lunch time will apply. 1st to 3rd will play in the Junior Yard, 4th to 6th in the Senior Yard. Classes will not be permitted to play with each other. One teacher will supervise in each yard with an SNA. SNAs will do first aid wearing P.P.E. Two SNAs will attend the Junior yard for breaks. All classes will eat for ten minutes inside before proceeding to the yard for lunchtime. Teachers will accompany children down to their designated zone in the yard.

On wet days a wet duty timetable will apply. 1st class (Ms Rogers) will eat in their class at 12.20 they will then be accompanied to the computer room and sit on a chair with a SNA in the room with them. Two teachers will supervise the corridors. One minding 2ndth, 5th and 6th and one supervising 1st, 4th and 3rd. Lunch will be provided by Carambola for children receiving the lunch scheme. Lunch rubbish will be taken home. Teachers will collect their class lunch crates, sanitise their hands and distribute lunch.

- **Toileting:** One toilet will be designated to each class to ensure class bubbles use the same facilities. Teachers will encourage children to use the toilet before or after yard. One child per class will be permitted to use the toilet at a time. Children will be encouraged to follow hygiene and hand washing advice. Markings will be placed in the yard to allow socially distant queuing for toilets. Toilet rolls will be provided in each toilet.
- **First Aid:** Small first aid kits will be left in each classroom. The big first aid kits will be left at the front and back doors for yard time. SNAs will provide first aid at break times and wear P.P.E. Blue paper towels will be placed on ice packs and disposed of after use. Ice packs will only be used when necessary and will be cleaned after use.
- **Bins:** Pedal bins with lids will be provided in each class. Waste will be closed and bin bags will be knotted and placed outside class doors by teachers at the end of each day for collection by our caretaker.
- **Cleaning:** The school will be cleaned by the cleaning company every day. Hard surfaces, handles and switches will be wiped down. Teachers will be responsible for own work stations. Four hours a day cleaning five days a week will be provided. A deep summer clean will be happening in August. Cleaning supplies will be widely available in each room. Tablets will be wiped after each use and toys and resources will be cleaned regularly.
- **Messages:** Children will not be permitted to go to other classrooms on messages. A post box will be placed outside each classroom for notes and messages to be placed in.
- **Money collections:** Databiz online payments will be set up in the future. Until this is up and running parents will be asked to send money payments in a closed envelop in the students' school bag. Teacher will place the money in a sealed plastic folder and Ms. Mc Nally will collect money from teachers.
- **Roll call:** The bell will ring at 10.10 and attendance will be recorded online through Databiz.
- All new staff will receive induction training.
- Staff will fill in pre return to work forms 3 days prior to commencing work.
- **Windows** will be kept open as far as practical to provide good ventilation. Doors will be left ajar to avoid touching door handles unnecessarily. CO2 monitors will be shared between classrooms to monitor levels throughout the day.
- **Corridors** will be segregated using strips of tape to separate into halves and arrows to show directions, keeping everyone to the left.

- **Visitors** to the school must make a prior appointment. Parents will not be permitted on the school premises without a prior appointment. Social distancing must be observed. Parents will be encouraged to contact teachers via their school emails which will be provided. Parents collecting children for necessary appointments must stay outside and ring the school for attention. School office for calls: 0429334574. School mobile for texts: 0861664921.
- **Homework:** When homework commences a two folder system for homework will apply. Books can be placed in a folder for the week. Folders will be taken back and left untouched to decontaminate for 72 hours before being passed onto the next child. Small bags will be allowed with only essentials and children will be prohibited from taking in toys etc. No sharing of personal items will be permitted.
- **PM shared readers:** Children will have readers assigned to them for the week and readers will be collected at 10am on Friday morning and placed in a sealed box for decontamination. 72 hours later from 10 am on Monday morning books can be redistributed for use by different children.
- **Closing times:**
Junior and Senior Infants will exit the building one class at a time to ensure distancing. They will stand in their designated area of the yard and wait for a parent to collect them at the school gates. Teachers will release children to a parent/ guardian/ nominated contact.

1st – 6th Classes: Children will be accompanied by their class teacher to the yard and stand in their class zone. Classes will take turns exiting the building ensuring physical distancing from other classes. Parents will collect children at the gate and will not be permitted to enter the yard or school premises. Staff members will supervise the gate. Children who walk home will leave immediately. Younger siblings will follow their class to the yard where they will meet with older siblings. 1st class will exit via the middle door. 2nd, 5th and 6th will exit via the front door. 4th and 3rd class will exit via the back door.

- **Coats and belongings:**
Coats will be hung on hooks outside the classroom and grouped according to the children's pods. A hook will be designated for each child to avoid sharing of hooks. Children will collect coats with their pods when exiting the building for yard times and home time.

Children will be permitted to take a folder or a small school bag to school to carry homework or lunch. Children will be prohibited from bringing toys or personal belongings to school. Children will leave their pencil case or stationery at school in their classroom. Children will be provided with an area where all of their belongings will be stored within their pods. Zip lock bags will be provided for stationery and they will be kept in this designated area. Children will not share stationery. Teaching resources will be kept and shared within pods and cleaning procedures will be followed after use. Children will not share books.

- **Face coverings:** Face covering are mandatory for all staff according to public health advice. Face coverings will be provided for all staff by the school. All teachers will be offered screens for their desks. Portable desk screens will be provided for each class to accommodate working with children and hearing reading etc.
 - ❖ HSE guidelines update (01/12/2021): All children in 3rd to 6th class must wear a face covering in school. Face masks must be provided by parents. Children will be provided with a sealable bag to store facemasks when not required e.g. eating, outdoor breaks and P.E.

- **Junior Infants First Day at school:** Junior infants will commence at 9.40 am on their first day. Parents will come into yard and children will be taken in by a teacher. In advance there will be a staggered open day for parents and children, time slots will be given to tour the school in small groups.

- **Staffroom:** To accommodate social distancing with staff we will be using both parents' rooms and the old staffroom for staff breaks. SNAs and the secretary will use the old staff room for breaks. Teachers will be grouped into pods for lunchtime and be designated a specific room for break times. Staff will be responsible for cleaning their own area before and after use. Staff will maintain social distancing.

No dishwasher will be available for delph or cutlery as each staff member must take their own cutlery and cups etc and take them home to clean. The dishwasher will be available for cleaning toys and resources.

- **Isolation room:** A small room beside an exit door has been selected as an isolation room should a student or teacher present with Covid related symptoms during school hours. P.P.E. and a non contact thermometer will be supplied. Carers will maintain social distance. Parents will be contacted immediately and asked to collect their child and advised to call their GP. The room will be thoroughly cleaned after use.

Children who become unwell during the day but do not present with typical Covid symptoms such as a high temperature, difficulty breathing and a new cough will wait in a designated area outside the office while waiting for their parents to collect them. They will be masked. A log of these children will be kept in the office with the symptoms they are displaying.

- **Photocopying:** A second photocopier was placed in the computer room for use by teachers to avoid traffic in the school office.

a. 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.

b. Induction Training

All new 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.

c. Induction Training for Return to School

The Department has prepared short induction training for schools operating the summer provision this year. It is intended that this training will be updated and become more comprehensive to cover all aspects of the return to school safely protocols. The Induction training for the Summer Provision may be of interest in the context of the kind of training which staff will need to undertake is available at the following link.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/summerprovision/summer-education-programme-2020.html#SchoolBased>

d. 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 hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility and should be available in each classroom.

e. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Department has published “*Guidance to Primary and Special Schools on PPE consumables and equipment*” on www.gov.ie/backtoschool. This provides schools with the information needed on the appropriate quantities of PPE consumables and equipment to support the safe and sustainable operations of schools. The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education has recommended that face coverings should 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. The Department has accepted this recommendation.

Accordingly, 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.

Workers should be trained in the proper use, donning/doffing, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE. The HPSC has produced posters and videos on the correct donning and doffing of PPE available on the HPSC and HSA websites

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid19_coronavirus_information_and_resources/covid19_business_supports/business_supports/hse-hpsc_posters_and_videos/

PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- Performing intimate care
- 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 in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category
- Administering first aid Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

Face Coverings/Masks

The wearing of face coverings or masks in general is not a substitute for other measures outlined below (physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, adequate ventilation, minimising contacts) but they may be used in addition to these protective measures, especially where maintaining physical/social distancing is difficult.

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.

In childcare and educational settings, the implementation of mandatory face-covering usage is challenging, as it is known that children will have a lower tolerance and ability to use the face covering properly, and use of face-coverings by teachers and staff caring for very young children may cause undue stress to the children. It is not recommended that children attending primary school wear face-coverings. 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. In certain situations the use of clear

visitors should be considered, for example staff interacting with pupils with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:

- Any person with difficulty breathing
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

f. 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.

g. Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made.

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

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

h. 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. In addition see visitor contact log at **Appendix 3**.

i. First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Castletown Girls' School.

In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999

Contact the principal or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

10. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following outlines how Castletown Girls' School will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area should be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Castletown Girls' School the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
- Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

- Advice should 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, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them 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, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- Arrange 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 and staff confidentiality is essential at all times.

11. 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. 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. 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. All staff have a key role to play
- 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 or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- 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
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

12. Covid related absence management

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

13. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal