

# COVID-19 Response Plan

## **COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Primrose Hill National School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all members of staff and pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The Board of Management and all members of 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 and amend 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.
- 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.
- Keep a contact log to help contact tracing.
- Ensure staff engage with the induction/ familiarisation briefing in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 during school time.
- Implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone (adult or child) showing symptoms of COVID-19 while in school.
- Provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day.
- Implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice.

All members of 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, who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed (Chairperson): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Principal): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **1. Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

The Board of Management of Primrose Hill National School aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace for all staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Details for the safe reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

The Board of Management has identified suitably trained persons to help with ensuring that the plan is implemented and checklists are completed. Persons have been identified who have agreed to take responsibility for carrying out tasks such as:

- Role of Lead Worker Representative (LWR).
- Use of checklists to identify any areas for improvement.
- Regular checks to ensure the plan is being implemented.
- Review of risk assessments and the safety statement.
- Training.
- Reviewing emergency procedures and first aid.

The Board of Management has consulted with the persons responsible for these tasks and have:

- Briefed them on the tasks and responsibilities.
- Entered their name against the relevant task in the Responsible Persons table (below) and asked each responsible person to sign to indicate their agreement with carrying out the task.

| <b>Responsible Persons Task Register</b> |   |                                |                  |
|--|---|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>No.</b>                               | <b>Tasks</b>  | <b>Responsible Person</b>      | <b>Signature</b> |
| 1  | Person responsible for the overall implementation of the plan | Caroline Flood                 |                  |
| 2  | Identification and training of the Lead Worker Representative | Caroline Flood                 |                  |
| 3  | Planning and Preparing to Return to School                    | Board of Management            |                  |
| 4  | Control Measures  | Niamh Manning                  |                  |
| 5  | COVID-19 Induction  | Each staff member              |                  |
| 6  | Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19                     | SET/SNA                        |                  |
| 7  | Cleaning and Disinfection                                     | Leinster Cleaning Services Ltd |                  |

|    |                               |                          |  |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
|    |                               | Individual staff members |  |
| 8  | Staff Information             | Caroline Flood           |  |
| 9  | Lead Worker Representative    | Niamh Manning            |  |
| 10 | Return to the Workplace forms | Caroline Flood           |  |

### **1.1 School Buildings**

The Board of Management has ensured that the school building meets the requirements established by the Department of Education in conjunction with current Public Health Advice. They have identified the following:

- Locations for hand sanitizing units to be placed at each entrance to the school building and within each classroom.
- Replacement of bins within each classroom for disposal of hand towel.
- Signage requirements both within the school building and on the school grounds.
- No structural changes required across the internal or external school building to meet the physical distancing requirements set out by the Department of Education.

### **1.2 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 will be updated 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, who is supported in this role by the Board of Management.

### **1.3 Procedure for Returning to Workplace (RTW)**

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

A RTW form should be completed and returned 3 days before returning to the workplace.

The Principal will also provide details of the Induction Training for completion by staff 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.

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at very high risk. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

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

- Are over 70 years of age – even if 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 immunosuppression drugs.
- Have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD.
- Have a condition that means they 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 immunosuppression therapies).
- Have a serious heart condition and are pregnant.

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff are outlined in Circular 0049/2020 *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

#### **1.4 Lead Worker Representative**

The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each school. The LWR will work in collaboration with the Principal and Board of Management to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and monitor

adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

This section sets out how the provision will operate in Primrose Hill National School. The process for appointment of the lead worker representative in all schools has been agreed centrally between the Department of Education and the education partners.

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 in-school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in Primrose Hill National School, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, pupils or others, he/she should contact the LWR who will engage with the Principal and Board of Management.

#### **1.4.1 Role of the Lead Worker Representative**

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts.
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice.
- In conjunction with school management, 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 school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice.
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures.

- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them.
- Consult with school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area.
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up actions that is required.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Name of the Lead Worker Representative: Niamh Manning.

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 and to assist with the implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

Full details of the arrangements which will apply for the LWR in primary schools is set out at Appendix 3 of the Department of Education and Skills' *COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools*.

### **1.5 Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in Primrose Hill National School is attached at Appendix 2 of this document. Changes made to existing emergency procedures that have arisen due to the school's Response Plan have been documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement.

The standard First Aid/ emergency procedure shall continue to apply in schools. 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.

### **1.6 Access to School and Contact Log**

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

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the

Principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit Primrose Hill National School to support the teaching and learning in the school, as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

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 to the school. A detailed sign in/ sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts and visitors will fill out the contact log sheet at Appendix 3 of this document.

All school records and data must be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with the Board of Management in their role as data controller.

## **2. Control Measures – To Prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Primrose Hill National School**

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; pupil-pupil, teacher-teacher and teacher-pupil and must be managed in all settings.

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 and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully co-operate with all health and safety requirements. Staff 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.

### **2.1 Minimising the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into the School**

The Board of Management will promote the awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (as outlined in Section 2.2). They will:

- Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Advise staff and pupil not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in the school (details outlined in Section \_).
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to the school during the school day should be by prior arrangement and should be received in the front entrance lobby area.
- Physical distancing (of 2 metres) should be maintained between staff and visitors, where possible.

## **2.2 Know the 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 or taste or distortion of taste

## **2.3 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 and safely into a nearby bin. You should wash or sanitise your hands after discarding the tissue.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

Signage outlining good respiratory hygiene has been placed in all classrooms.



## **2.4 Hand Hygiene**

Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Primrose Hill National School will promote good hand hygiene and display posters throughout the school and above each wash-hand basin on how to wash your hands.

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or through the use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

The use of all hand hygiene facilities will be monitored and managed by staff to ensure that hand hygiene areas are not over-crowded and to avoid any congregation of people waiting to use hand hygiene facilities.

There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

The Board of Management has identified three entrance and exit points to the school building where hand sanitiser dispensers will be located. Each classroom will also have a hand sanitiser dispenser which may be located beside the door or in the vicinity of the toilets. Care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent the risk of falls.

Warm water is preferable to hot or cold water for hand washing. However, a soap that emulsifies in cold water should be used in classrooms where the plumbing system only supplies cold water.

All classrooms, staff room and toilet areas are fitted with wash-hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities. Handwashing facilities should be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and hand towel should be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.

Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean). Evidence of effectiveness is best for alcohol-based hand rubs but non-alcohol-based

hand rubs can be used too. When hand gels are being used in school, care should be taken to ensure that pupils do not ingest them as they are flammable and toxic.

Young children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.

#### **2.4.1 Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene at the following times:

- 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

#### **2.5 Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing can be used usefully in primary school settings, allowing for some flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on the issue. Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning. Care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times.

It is also recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil, i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face-to-face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/ crouching down. Where it is not possible to maintain a 1m or 2m distance, staff should wear a face covering such as a face mask or visor.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation (Section 2.5.1)
- Decreasing interaction (Section 2.5.2)

##### **2.5.1 Increasing Separation**

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, staff have:

- Reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing
- Utilised and reconfigured all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing
- Removed unnecessary furniture from around the walls of the classrooms

The teacher's desk should be a minimum of 1m and where possible, 2m away from pupil desks.

### **2.5.2 Decreasing Interaction**

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in a primary school setting depends on the school/ classroom setting and a common-sense approach is required recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between pupils.

A distance of 1m should be maintained between desks or between individual pupils. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore, achieving this recommendation from Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class is not a pre-requisite to reopening Primrose Hill National School. Where possible work stations should be allocated consistently to the same staff and children. In this sense, Special Education Teachers will work with children in their classroom bubbles rather than be withdrawn to another space within the school.

Classroom bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) will be utilised within Primrose Hill National School and discrete groups or "pods" within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical. Pods will be utilised in junior classes. There should be 1m distance between individual pods and between individuals within pods, where possible.

Generally speaking, the objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between pupils in different Classroom Bubbles/ Pods as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class grouping from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Classroom Bubbles is an additional measure to limit the extent of close contact within the Classroom Bubble.

Pod sizes should be kept small (between 3 and 5 pupils) as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context. To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff

should be consistently be in the same Classroom Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times. Different Classroom Bubbles should where possible have separate breaks and a staggered breaktime timetable has been drawn up.

Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided/ minimised where possible.

Staff members/ SET who move from classroom bubble to classroom bubble should be limited as much as possible.

### **2.5.3 Additional Measures to Decrease Interaction Include**

- Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) should be discouraged.
- Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities, it should be organised to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation.
- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/ pencils in the mouth).
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

### **2.5.4 Physical Distancing Outside of the Classroom and Within the School**

#### **2.5.4.1 School Drop Off/ Collection**

A staggered timetable for parents to drop-off pupils at the school has been arranged. Pupils have been divided into two groups according to their surname. Times have been arranged alphabetically as follows:

8.30am – 8.40am: Surnames A – J

8.40am – 8.50am: Surnames K – Z

Three entrance and exits points to the school building have been identified by the Board of Management for use to reduce congestion and congregation of pupils and parents at the main door of the school building. Physical distancing of 2m is encouraged at all times and signage to promote physical distancing is displayed in prominent places around the school grounds as reminders for parents and guardians.

Active travel to and from school is encouraged to reduce traffic congestion outside the school during drop-off and collection times.

Currently collection times have not been staggered, however, this situation will be under review when the school reopens to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained at this time.

#### **2.5.4.2 Staff**

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly important when not engaged in teaching activities such as the staff room and arriving to school. Risks and control measures regarding the use of the staff room and other non-classroom areas for staff are outlined in the school's COVID-19 Risk Assessment at Appendix 2.

If a 2m distance cannot be maintained, face coverings should be worn. Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of the staggered break timetable.

Staff meetings will be held remotely as there is not a suitable space within the school building for meetings to take place under physical distancing guidelines.

#### **2.5.4.3 Playground/ Supervision**

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

Staggered breaktimes have been arranged for all classroom bubbles to minimise crowding at entrance and exit points as well as to provide classroom bubbles for greater space to play. A staggered timetable has also been drawn up for outdoor access for The Daily Mile and P.E. time for each classroom bubble.

Staff and pupils are encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

### **2.6 Use of PPE in Primrose Hill National School**

The use of PPE will be required to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain activities or work areas. This may include:

- 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.
- Where staff are unable to maintain a physical distance of 1m with pupils and 2m with other staff members.

Appropriate PPE is available for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where a staff member provides healthcare to a pupil with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

### **2.6.1 Masks**

Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

- Has trouble breathing
- Is unconscious or incapacitated
- Is unable to remove it without help
- Has special needs who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering.

For staff, face coverings should not be required if physical distancing is possible and practiced appropriately. Wearing a face covering will conceal facial expression and make communication difficult. The use of a visor as an alternative may be considered where is a concern regarding prolonged close contact and exposure to fluid/ respiratory droplets.

### **2.6.2 Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings. Routine use 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.

## **3. Impact of COVID-19 on Certain School Activities**

Under advice from the Department of Education and the public health authorities, decisions have been made regarding some school activities.

Pupils and staff should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared items.

### **3.1 Music within the School**

It has been agreed amongst staff that the continuation of recorder lessons in their current format is not a safe and viable option. We are unable to provide physical distancing between pupils during lessons or to provide an alternative space where recorder lessons could take place. Therefore, there will be no recorder lessons for the first term of the new academic year, 2020/ 2021. The situation for recorder lessons will be reviewed towards the end of the first term in line with advice from the Department of Education and public health authorities.

We will also be reviewing the entire Music Policy to ensure correct physical distancing can be maintained during singing classes. Classes will focus on the strands of *Listening and Responding* and *Composing* during the first term.

### **3.2 Toys**

All toys should be cleaned on a weekly basis. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs. Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal. Class teachers are responsible for cleaning the toys in their own classrooms (see Risk Assessment at Appendix 2).

When purchasing new toys, a conscious effort should be made to ensure the following:

- Toys that are easy to clean and disinfect.
- Cloth or soft toys should be machine washable.

All play equipment should be checked for signs of damage, breaks and cracks. If they cannot be cleaned or repaired, they should be discarded. Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed. Soft modelling materials and play dough should be for individual use only.

#### **3.2.1 Cleaning Procedure for Toys**

- Wash the toy in warm, soapy water, using a brush to get the crevices.
- Rinse the toy in clean water.
- Thoroughly dry the toy.
- Some hard, plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher.

- Toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind-up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried.
- In some situations, toys/ equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning, i.e. equipment that has been placed in the pupil's mouth; equipment that has been soiled with blood or bodily fluid; toys where a case of COVID-19 has been identified.
- If disinfection is required, a chlorine releasing disinfectant should be used diluted to a concentration of 1,000ppm available chlorine. The item should be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

### **3.3 Art Equipment**

Where possible, pupils will be encouraged to have their own individual art equipment and supplies.

- Junior Infants to 1<sup>st</sup> Class will be asked to keep their painting shirt in a ziplock bag in their schoolbags.
- All pupils will be assigned their own scissors and gluestick.

### **3.4 Electronics**

Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screen whiteboards and whiteboard pens should be cleaned between use and consideration could be given to the use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning.

### **3.5 Musical Equipment and Instruments**

As mentioned in Section 3.1, recorder lessons will not resume for term 1 of the forthcoming academic year.

To the greatest possible extent, instruments should not be shared between pupils. If sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

### **3.6 Library Books and Rental Textbooks**

Where practical pupils should have their own reading books. If a pupil chooses a book from the class library and finishes the book, the book should be placed in a "Used Resources" box in the classroom for wiping down by the class teacher.

All pupils from 2<sup>nd</sup> Class up will be provided with an individual box to store their rental textbooks for the academic year. Rental books will be placed in the boxes prior to the



beginning of the school year. Damaged or lost rental books should be replaced by the parent prior to the end of the academic year. Rental textbooks, that may require sharing between pupils, should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between shared uses.

#### **4. Hygiene and Cleaning in Primrose Hill National School**

Primrose Hill National School will be cleaned on a daily basis. Leinster Cleaning Services Ltd has been granted the contract for cleaning the school and should follow advice from the HSPC.

Leinster Cleaning Services Ltd have responsibility for the ensuring the following:

- Emptying bins around the school building.
- Ensuring frequently touched surfaces (door handles, chair backs, toilets, taps, sink areas, pupil table tops) are thoroughly cleaned and sanitised.
- Hoovering and mopping floors.
- Removing dust from window ledges and other cleared surface tops.

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.

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

##### **4.1 How to Clean**

Cleaning is best achieved when using a general-purpose detergent and warm water, clean cloths and mops and the mechanical action of wiping/scrubbing. The area should then be rinsed and dried. The routine use of disinfectants is generally not appropriate but is recommended in the event of a circumstance where high-risk cross-contamination may occur, for example where a child/ staff member has become ill whilst at school or there has been a spillage of blood, faeces or vomit.

|          | Routine           | Post-COVID Case   |
|----------|-------------------|---|
| Surfaces | Neutral detergent | Neutral detergent AND 0.05% sodium hypochlorite or virucidal disinfectant |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Toilets                                 | Neutral detergent AND 0.1% Sodium Hypochlorite or virucidal disinfectant | 0.1% sodium hypochlorite or virucidal disinfectant   |
| Cleaning Equipment                      | Non-disposable, cleaned at the end of the cleaning session               | Non-disposable disinfected with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite or virucidal disinfectant   |
| Personal Protective Equipment for Staff | Uniform and Household gloves   | Uniform AND plastic apron AND household gloves   |
| Waste management                        | Domestic waste stream  | Place in plastic bag and tie, the place in a second plastic bag and store securely for 72 hours before placing it out for collection in the domestic waste stream. |

Disinfectants are potentially hazardous and must be used with caution and according to the manufacturer's instructions. Surfaces and items must be cleaned prior to a disinfectant being applied as most disinfectants are inactivated by dirt. The manufacturer's instructions for mixing, using and storing solutions must always be followed.

Using excessive amounts of cleaning agents will not kill more germs or clean better but they will damage work surfaces, make floors slippery and give off unpleasant odours. Water should be changed when it looks dirty, after cleaning bathrooms and after cleaning the kitchen area of the staff room. Always clean the least dirty items and surfaces first. Always clean high surfaces first following by low surfaces.

- Separate colour coded cleaning cloths and cleaning equipment should be used for kitchen areas, classrooms and toilets.
- Ideally reusable cleaning cloths should be laundered daily on a hot wash cycle (at least 60°C) in a washing machine and then tumble dried.
- Ideally mop heads should be removed and washed in the washing machine at 60°C at the end of each day or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- As Primrose Hill National School does not have a washing machine or tumble dryer, then after use, the cloths and mops should be cleaned thoroughly with warm water and detergent, then disinfected using a low concentration of household bleach, rinsed and air dried.
- Mop heads and buckets should not be cleaned in a sink that is used for food preparation.
- Mop heads should not be left in dirty water.
- Buckets should be emptied after use, washed with detergent and warm water and stored dry.

- If equipment is stored wet, it allows germs to grow increasing the risk of cross infection.
- Waste bins should be emptied on a daily basis.

## **4.2 Toilets**

The toilets in all classrooms should be clean and in good repair and monitored regularly. Staff should inform the Principal of any damage to toilets immediately so repair can be arranged. All toilet areas in Primrose Hill National School have hand washing facilities.

Toilets, ash hand basins and surrounding areas should be cleaned daily as per the cleaning schedule and whenever there is visible soiling in the area. The cleaning of toilets, bathroom sinks and sanitary facilities used by members of the school community should be carefully performed.

- Toilets should be cleaned thoroughly using a general-purpose detergent paying particular attention to frequently touched areas such as toilet flush handles, toilet seats, basins and taps as well as toilet door handles.
- Separate cloths should be used for cleaning the toilet and wash hand basin to reduce the risk of spreading germs from the toilet to the wash hand basin.
- Cleaning staff should inspect the toilets and hand washing facilities daily to ensure that all are in good working order (e.g. the locks on the toilet doors are working; the toilets are not blocked).
- Cleaning staff should ensure that there is a plentiful supply of liquid soap, paper towels and toilet roll in each toilet for use the following day.
- Bins with discarded paper towel should be emptied daily.

## **4.3 Schedule of Environmental Cleaning**

Primrose Hill National School will be cleaned on a daily basis with services from Leinster Cleaning Service Ltd.

A written cleaning schedule will be available to cleaning staff which details:

- Items and areas to be cleaned
- Cleaning materials to be used
- Equipment to be used
- Written cleaning schedule should be available and monitored to ensure that they are adequate and are being followed.

#### **4.4 Cleaning/ Disinfecting Rooms Where a Pupil/ Staff Member with Suspected COVID-19 was Present**

- The room should be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.
- Once the room is vacated, the room should not be re-used until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.
- The person assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.
- Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent following by disinfection with a chlorine-based product (household bleach).
- Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be re-used.
- If a pupil or staff member diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area, then these areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant as soon as is practically possible.

#### **5. Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines the procedures that Primrose Hill National School will use should a case of COVID-19 be suspected in the school setting during the school day.

A designated isolation room has been identified by the Board of Management – the Learning Support Room. This room can be well-ventilated through opening a window and two doors as well as having toilet accessibility and is close to the rear door of the building. This room is also not close to classrooms where other pupils and/ or staff members may identify someone with a suspected case of COVID-19.

If a staff member or pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 (outlined in Section 2.2) while at school, the following procedures will be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/ guardians of the pupil will be contacted immediately.

- The person will be brought to the isolation room by a member of staff. The accompanying member of staff should ensure a minimum distance of 2m from the person and ensure that others met along the route also maintain a 2m distance.
- The accompanying member of staff and/ or staff member caring for a pupil should ensure that a face covering is worn. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin.
- Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room.
- A face mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms (pupil or staff member). He/ she should wear the mask if in a common area with others and when exiting the school building.
- The person displaying symptoms will be assessed and directed to go home/ be brought home by parents. Self-isolation should continue at home and GP should be called.
- If the person displaying symptoms cannot immediately go home, they will be facilitated in the isolation room and the school will call their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the individual to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue into the waste bin provided and immediately engage in hand hygiene.
- If the person is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member as soon as possible. The family member will be advised to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport should not be used.
- If the person is too unwell to go home or further advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform the emergency services that there is a suspected case of COVID-19 in the school.
- An assessment of the incident will be carried out and will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Cleaning of the isolation area and other areas affected will be carried out as per Section 4.1.
- 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 and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

## **6. Special Educational Needs**

### **6.1 Additional Considerations for those with Special Educational Needs**

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be

on emphasising that parents/ guardians have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/ COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present, children should not attend school.

Similarly, staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend school if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

## **6.2 Hand Hygiene**

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if hands are visibly clean) as outlined in Section 2.4.

## **6.3 Equipment**

Some children have care needs (either physical or behavioural or both) which require the use of aids and appliances. Cleaning of such aids and appliances should be carried out by the child's assigned SNA (Special Needs Assistant) or Class Teacher. The cleaning of such equipment should be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for the aid or appliance.

The following should be observed in relation to all aids and appliances used by children with SEN:

- Equipment should be visibly clean.
- Equipment that may be shared between children must be clean and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child.
- If equipment is soiled with bodily fluids, then:
  - First clean thoroughly with detergent and water
  - Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant
  - Rinse with water and dry.

## **7. 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 co-operation 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. In this regard, and in order to facilitate a safe return to the workplace, these duties include, but are limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete RTW form before they return to the workplace.
- 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.
- Co-ordinate 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 well-being.
- 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.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined in Section 5.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

## **8. COVID-19 Related Absence Management**

The management of COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education and outlined in Circular 0049/2020 *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

## **9. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department of Education recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including PDST and CSL, as well as by the SHE's Health Promotion Team. An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. It comprises of the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service is provided by Spectrum.Life under the logo "*Wellbeing Together;/ Folláinne Le Chéile*".

Under EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, providing advice on a range of issues such as

wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support, etc... Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in school as school reopen and during the upcoming school year.

### Appendix 1 Return to the Workplace Questionnaire COVID-19

This questionnaire must be completed by staff at least 3 days in advance of returning to the workplace. It can be printed out here or filled in online using this link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1LS3eYEdK-gs-LTPudFVy7zqok4uSQXEE-HRviACnnCw/prefill>

If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

|    | Questions   | YES | NO |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 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?  |     |    |
| 2. | Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?   |     |    |
| 3. | Have you been advised by the HSE that you are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?   |     |    |
| 4. | Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?   |     |    |
| 5. | Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?   |     |    |
| 6. | Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high risk group?<br>If yes, please liaise with Principal re return to work and follow the agreed DES arrangements for very high risk groups |     |    |



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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 and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school 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 this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_