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**Covid Response Plan**

**St Michael’s National School**

**Donaghmoyne**

**Carrickmacross**

**Co. Monaghan**

**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 St. Michael’s National 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 (NPHET).

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 NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures which 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**
3. **School Building**
4. **Signage**
5. **Procedures for Returning to Work (RTW)**
6. **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
7. **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
8. **General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
9. **Wash your hands Frequently**
10. **Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser**
11. **Avoiding Touching your Eyes, Nose and Mouth**
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13. **Practice Respiratory Hygiene**
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16. **People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)**
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18. **Control Measures**
19. **Return to Work Form**
20. **Induction Training**
21. **Induction Training – Online Video**
22. **Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**
23. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
24. **Wearing of Gloves**
25. **Cleaning**
26. **Access to the School Building/ Contact Log**
27. **First Aid/ Emergency Procedure**
28. **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid – 19**
29. **Staff Duties**
30. **Covid related absence management**
31. **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 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](http://www.education.ie);

**2. St. Michael’s National 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.

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| **COVID 19 Policy Statement**St. Michael’s National 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 anyconcerns, issues or suggestions.This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative Fiona Whelan (Principal)Signed: \_\_\_Fiona Whelan\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_Sep 2020\_\_\_\_\_ |

**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 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.

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| --- | --- |
| Name of Lead Worker Representative: | Contact Details: |
| Fiona Whelan | Available in school office042 9662284 |
| Deputy Lead Worker Representatives: |  |
| Roisín Campbell | Available in school office042 9662284 |

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:

* High temperature
* Cough
* Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
* Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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.

St Michael’s National 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 a hand sanitiser (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.

**Note: Guidance on the physical distancing requirements will be informed by public health advice for schools and will be updated over the summer period.**

***e. 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 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
* severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
* have a condition that means you 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 you are pregnant

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 double gates (1st to 4th Classes) and the front single gate (Junior & Senior Infants and 5th & 6th Classes) by parents from 9.15am. Gates will be opened and supervised at 9.15am by two staff members. 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. Other staff members will supervise the corridors to ensure social distancing is observed. School door will close at 9.30am. Children should not be late.

 Any child who arrives after 9.30 am must remain at the front gate with a parent and the parent should ring the office 042 9662284 to request admittance.

* **Morning and Lunchtime breaks and supervision:** Class groups are “bubbles”. Staggered breaks and separate yards will be used in order to keep “bubbles” socially distanced from each other.

Morning break, 10:35am to 11am for Junior & Senior Infants on top yard, and 1st & 2nd Classes on front yard. 10:50am to 11:15am for 3rd & 4th Classes on front yard and 5th & 6th Classes on top yard. “Bubbles” will not be permitted to play with each other. Each teacher will supervise their own class bubble in their respective yard for morning break. All classes will eat for ten minutes inside before proceeding to the yard for break time. Teachers will accompany children to their designated yard.

Lunch break 12:30pm to 1pm for Junior & Senior Infants on top yard and 1st & 2nd Classes on front yard. 1pm to 1:30pm for 3rd & 4th Classes on front yard and 5th & 6th Classes on top yard. Children will eat for fifteen minutes inside before proceeding to the yard for break time. Ms Whelan and Ms Cunningham will supervise all outside breaks at lunchtime.

On wet days a wet duty timetable will apply. All children will remain in their bubbles/pods in their classrooms and teachers will supervise their own class bubbles at morning break. The same will apply at lunch break. The children will be supervised while eating by their teacher and then will be supervised by Ms Whelan and Ms Cunningham in the children’s classrooms. Lunch rubbish will be taken home.

* **Toileting:** A card system will be used in each classroom bubble. Only one boy and one girl can use their respective toilets at a time. They take the card from their classroom with them and place it on the toilet door to show that it is in use. If another child goes to the toilet and sees a card on the door then they know someone is using the toilet and must wait on a spot in the corridor until that person leaves the toilet and takes their card with them. The child that’s waiting can then place their card on the door and enter the toilet. One toilet will be designated for Junior and Senior Infants. The other toilet will be used by the other children. Regular cleaning of the toilets will be done throughout the day. Teachers will encourage children to use the toilet before or after yard breaks. Children will be encouraged to follow hygiene and hand washing advice. A mark will be placed in the corridor to show where a second child can wait to use the toilet. If a third child sees someone waiting in the corridor they must return to their class for a few minutes until the waiting spot id clear, unless it is an emergency. Toilet rolls and hand washing facilities will be provided in each toilet.
* **First Aid:** Small first aid kits will be left in each classroom. The bigger first aid kit will be in the office. Ms Whelan and Ms Cunningham will provide first aid at break times and wear P.P.E. A small clean cloth will be placed on ice packs and washed after use. Used ice packs will be disposed of.
* **Bins:**  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 cleaner.
* **Cleaning:** The school will be cleaned by the cleaner every day. Hard surfaces, handles and switches will be wiped down. Teachers will be responsible for own work stations. Three 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 or the office, on messages. A post box will be placed outside each classroom for notes and messages to be placed in.
* **Money collections:** Bank transfer payments for parents have been set up. Parents will be asked to send all money donations/fundraising money into school, in a closed envelope in the students’ school bag. Teacher will ask if any student has money in with them and will ask the student to place the money in a sealed plastic folder. Debby will collect the sealed plastic folder containing the money from teachers and will process it in the office.
* **Roll call:**  The roll will be called at 10:30am and attendance will be recorded online through the school system “Aladdin”.
* All staff will receive induction training.
* Staff will fill in pre return to work forms 3 days prior to commencing work.
* Staff and children who have travelled abroad to countries not on the Green List will be asked not to attend school for 14 days to quarantine.
* **Windows** will be kept open as far as practical to provide good ventilation. Doors will be left ajar to avoid touching door handles unnecessarily.
* **Corridors**: everyone using the corridor will keep to the left-hand side.
* **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: 042 9662284.
* **Homework**: Homework will be given as normal from the second week in September to ease children back into school routines. School bags and lunch 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** will remain in the school. Children will have readers designated to them for the week and readers will be collected at 10am on Friday morning and placed in a box for decontamination. 72 hours later from 10 am on Monday morning books can be redistributed for use by different children.
* **Closing times:**

At 2pm the class teacher will take Junior and Senior Infants to the front yard, using the front door exit. They will stand in their designated area of the front yard and wait for a parent to collect them at the school gate. Teachers will release children to a parent/ guardian/ nominated contact.

Ms Whelan and Ms Cunningham will supervise 1st-6th classes going home as follows:

Class teachers will remain in their classrooms.

Classes will take turns exiting the building ensuring physical distancing from other classes.

**At 2:50pm** 1st & 2nd Classes will leave by the back door and go to the double front gates.

They will stand in their designated area of the front yard and wait for a parent to collect them at the school gate. Teachers will release children to a parent/ guardian/ nominated contact.

**At 2:55pm** 3rd &4th classes will leave by the back door and go to the double front gates.

They will stand in their designated area of the front yard and wait for a parent to collect them at the school gate. Teachers will release children to a parent/ guardian/ nominated contact.

**At 3:00pm** 5th & 6th Classes will leave by the front door and go to the single front gate.

They will stand in their designated area of the front yard and wait for a parent to collect them at the school gate. Teachers will release children to a parent/ guardian/ nominated contact.

Parents will collect children at the gate and will not be permitted to enter the yard or school premises. Children who go to the “Afterschool” will wait with the Afterschool staff member at a designated place on the front yard until the all the other children have left. The Afterschool staff member can then take their group of children up to their building.

* **Coats and belongings:**

Children will take their coats and belongings into their classroom. Coats will be hung on the back of their chairs. Schoolbags and lunch bags will be kept under their tables. Baskets are fixed to the underside of tables where books, pencil cases, etc can be kept.

Children will be prohibited from bringing toys or personal belongings to school. 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. Visors and reusable face masks will be provided for all staff. Staff may also wear a mask if they so choose.
* **Junior Infants First 2 Days at school:** Junior infants will commence at 9:30am. Parents will be permitted to come onto the middle yard with their child and will maintain social distance from other parents. Each child will be welcomed into their classroom by their teacher and once inside the parents will leave the school yard. In advance there will be a staggered introduction to the school with parents, time slots will be given to tour the school in small groups.
* **Staffroom:** To accommodate social distancing teachers breaks will be staggered so that only two teachers will be using the staffroom at any one time. The SNA and the secretary will take their breaks after the teachers breaks. Staff will take their own delph, cutlery etc and will take them home to clean. Staff will be responsible for cleaning their own area before and after use. Staff will maintain social distancing.
* **Isolation room:** A portacabin that is separate from the school building has been selected as an isolation room should a student or teacher present with Covid related symptoms during school hours. A covid 19 kit containing P.P.E. and cleaning equipment will be laced in the portacabin. Carers will maintain social distance. In the case of a child presenting with symptoms, the school will contact their parents immediately, and will ask them to collect their child. They will also be advised to call their GP. In the case of a staff member presenting with symptoms, the school will contact the person named as the emergency contact for that staff member. They will be asked to collect the staff member and they will also be advised to call their GP. The room will be thoroughly cleaned after use.
* **Photocopying:** The photocopier will only be used by staff and will be cleaned after each use.

***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 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.

**Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff**

***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 will be available in each classroom.

***e. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)***

PPE will not be required to be worn within the school facility according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.

Such include roles where:

* Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, and for first aid. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

The use of a face covering will conceal facial expression and can make communication difficult and as such may not be practical in a school setting. However, the wearing of a visor as an alternative to a facial covering may be considered where there is a concern that physical distancing cannot be maintained, there will be prolonged close contact and/or that exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets is likely.

***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, door handles and staff room. 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**.**

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 with 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

St Michael’s National 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 St. Michael’s National 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 St Michael’s National 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 publ**ic** 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