



## Covid-19 Response Plan

### Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM)/Education Training Board (ETB) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in St. Brigid's B.N.S.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. **Planning and Preparing for Return to School**
  - a. School Building
  - b. Signage
  - c. St. Brigid's B.N.S. Logistics Plan for School Reopening
2. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)/School
3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)
4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
6. Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19
  - a. Wash your Hands Frequently
  - b. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser
  - c. Physical Distancing
  - d. Practise Respiratory Hygiene
  - e. Do
  - f. Do Not
7. Control Measures
  - a. Department of Education (DES) Circular 43/2021
  - b. Return to Work Form
  - c. Induction Training
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  - e. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
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  - g. Use of Gloves/Aprons
  - h. Cleaning
  - i. Ventilation/CO2 Monitors
  - j. Access to the School Building / Contact Log
  - k. First Aid / Emergency Procedure
8. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
9. Impact of Covid -19 on certain School Activities
10. Special Educational Needs (SEN)
11. Staff Duties
12. Covid related Absence Management
13. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme
14. Other Supports to School

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](http://www.Gov.ie), [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie), [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie); [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie);

## St. Brigid's B.N.S. 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 (BOM) and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

### Covid-19 Policy Statement

St. Brigid's B.N.S. 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 and updated 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
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education and Skills
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of Covid-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education and Skills advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker representatives:

**F. Brennan & M. Reynolds.**

Signed: *Mr. S. Moran & Ms. N. Cullen*

Date: 25/08/2021

## 1. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management (BOM) aims to facilitate the continuation of school-based teaching and learning and a safe working environment for staff. The operation of schools 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 operation of a school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

### a. *School Buildings*

Before re-opening schools:

- The water system will be checked and flushed at outlets if necessary following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
- School equipment will be checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
- Bin collections and other essential services will be notified of resumption date.
- Cleaning staff will resume their duties and adhere to cleaning and hygiene arrangements as detailed in section 8f of this document.

### b. *Signage*

Signage outlining the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene is displayed in prominent areas of the school.

### c. *St. Brigid's B.N.S. Logistics Plan for School Reopening*

St. Brigid's B.N.S. Logistics Plan for School Reopening is attached at **Appendix 1**. This plan includes information on arrival and dismissal times of pupils and also contains a school map showing pupil designated zones.

## 2. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)/School

**STAFF** - In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available electronically [RTW Form](#) or from the Principal. A hard copy is attached also at **Appendix 2**.

Staff are requested to complete and return a Return to Work Form **3 days** prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

Staff are requested to confirm by email that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

## 3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

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.

The role of the Lead Worker Representative (LWR) is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- 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 implementing infection prevention control measures to suppress Covid-19 in the workplace in line with the 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 the 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 action 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.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Name of Lead Worker Representative (LWR)	Contact Details of Lead Worker Representative
Ms. F. Brennan (LWR) (Assisted by Ms. N. McCabe)	<a href="mailto:info@stbrigidsbns.ie">info@stbrigidsbns.ie</a> 018336149
Ms. M. Reynolds (Deputy LWR)	<a href="mailto:info@stbrigidsbns.ie">info@stbrigidsbns.ie</a> 018336149

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.

#### 4. Safety Statement and 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 school settings has been reviewed and is available to view in school.

Emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences have been reviewed to consider any new risks that arise due to Covid-19. Changes to the school's current risk assessment have been documented, where applicable.

#### 5. Know the Symptoms of Covid-19

In order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

Infection with the virus that causes Covid-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu. If you have any symptoms of Covid-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free Covid-19 test.

Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website. Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised. If you **do not** have symptoms, you can get a free Covid-19 (coronavirus) test at a Covid-19 walk-in test centre.

## 5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

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 pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation
- Advise staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of Covid-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test
- Advise staff and pupils, to follow the HSE advice if they are a close contact of a suspected/ confirmed case of Covid-19
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff and pupils are advised to consult and follow latest Government advices in relation to foreign travel
- 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 school
- Advise staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point (i.e. reception - secretary's office)
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

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. Brigid's B.N.S. will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

## 6. 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. In St. Brigid's B.N.S. the classroom toilets are provided with cold running water with recommended emulsifying soap.

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 sanitisers (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities.

Hand sanitisers are available at the main entry and exit point at reception and in each classroom.

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- 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.

Hand sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

### c. *Physical Distancing*

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

It is recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not always appropriate that they would be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil. 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.

### d. *Practise 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.

### e. *Do*

- Wear a face covering while on the school premises
- 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
- Wash hands or use sanitiser when entering /exiting vehicles and school buildings

**f. 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.

## 7. 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:

**a. Department of Education (DES) Circular 42/2021**

Circular 42/2021 details the arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary Schools and the general principles to apply in the management of Covid-19 in schools.

**b. Return to Work Form**

Staff will be required to complete an RTW form 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.

**c. Induction Training**

All staff completed Covid-19 Induction Training in September 2020 and staff are asked to refresh this training prior to return to work – [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) Training for Reopening Schools. All new staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
- Covid-19 symptoms
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan

Staff will continue to 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.



**d. *Making Changes to School Layout***

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key infection prevention control measures to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of Covid-19.

Classrooms and other areas have been reconfigured as necessary to support physical distancing in line with DES guidance.

**e. *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.

Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility and are available in each classroom.

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

Staff are required to wear face coverings where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

The Board of Management will provide surgical grade masks in the EN14683 category to all staff when school resumes following the summer break.

Additionally, the wearing of a visor as 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 i.e. if providing care that involves a risk of splashing of body fluids, a visor is required to protect eyes from splashing even if the person is already wearing a mask.

For a limited number of staff additional PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.

Such include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not in the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category
- Administering first aid

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected Covid-19 cases, intimate care needs 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.

**g. *Use of Gloves/Aprons***

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for cleaning, intimate care settings and when administering first aid. 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.

Aprons may also be appropriate in certain circumstances including for intimate care needs or for staff assigned to cleaning an area where a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 was present.

#### **h. Cleaning**

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

All staff have access to cleaning products and are 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.).

A detailed written weekly cleaning checklist is used by the cleaning staff to include the cleaning of frequently touched surfaces using general purpose detergent, warm water, disinfectant sprays, brushes, vacuum cleaners, clean cloths and mops.

#### **i. Ventilation/CO2 Monitors**

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice '*Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools*'. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times, assuming not in use and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. The Department has also published guidance regarding on how these practical steps measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors.

#### **j. Access to the school building /contact log**

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

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them 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 at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities is maintained and temperatures recorded. The school maintains a log of staff and students contacts. In addition, a visitor **GDPR Confidential Covid-19 Contact Trace Book** is available at reception.

#### **k. First Aid/Emergency Procedure**

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in St. Brigid's B.N.S.

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.

### **8. 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. Brigid's B.N.S. will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

Two designated isolation areas have been identified within the school building – **Rooms 9 & 15**. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation areas are behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils. (Further details available on Covid-19 Risk Assessment).

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in St. Brigid's B.N.S. the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
- Isolate the person and follow the 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, use a surgical mask, visor and gloves. Ensure others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
- Provide a disposable 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 while continuing 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 and ventilation of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- A nominated member of the school management team (Ms. McCabe) will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases has been adhered to.

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.

Staff are encouraged to download the HSE Covid-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

### **9. Impact of Covid-19 on certain School Activities**

- Toys/Equipment shall be checked and cleaned on a regular basis to remove dust and dirt.

- Toys /Equipment that are visibly dirty or contaminated shall be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.
- Where possible pupils will have their own individual art and equipment supplies.
- Shared equipment e.g. Electronics will be cleaned between use and pupils will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after using any shared item.
- Where practical, pupils will have their own books.
- If shared items are rotated between class groupings during the year, they will first be quarantined for 72 hours.
- Quarantining means placing these items in sealed boxes that are labelled with the time and date of the start of the 72-hour quarantine period. These boxes should be stored in a separate location away from active work areas within the school.
- Following the expiry of the 72-hour quarantine period the items may be unboxed, cleaned and prepared for the next class.
- Lessons will be given to pupils on hygienic use of materials.
- Choir and music practices/performances may pose a higher risk so special consideration will be given to increased ventilation and distances between performers.
- Sporting events will follow government guidelines.

## 10. Special Educational Needs

For pupils with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate. Therefore parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and where these symptoms are present, children should not attend school. 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.

Some children may have care needs which require the use of aids, appliances or equipment. Where these are cleaned in school, a cleaning schedule will be provided. The Sensory and Safe Space rooms are cleaned and sanitised daily by the cleaning staff.

## 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. 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. 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
- 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.
- New staff must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- All other staff will refresh their Covid-19 Induction Training prior to return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- 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 to or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- Follow the HSE guidance if they are identified as a close contact.
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.

- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
- Undergo any Covid-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.

## 12. Covid related Absence Management

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

## 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.

## 14. Other Supports to Schools

- Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including PDST and CSL, as well as the HSE's Health Promotion Team.
- An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) and the Occupational Health Service.
- The NEPS resource ***'Supporting the Wellbeing of Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) Returning to School'*** is targeted at supporting the planning and preparation for the transition back into school and to support re-engagement when the students return to the classroom.

### **Attached Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** St. Brigid's B.N.S. Logistics Plan for School Reopening

**Appendix 2:** Return to Work (RTW) Questionnaire

Signed: S. Moran

Date: 25/08/2021