

**St. Gabriel's**

**Covid-19 Response**  
**Plan**

**August 2021**

## **Introduction:**

The Minister for Education published *'The Roadmap for the Full Return to School'* on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020. It set out what the operation of schools will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context. Each workplace is required to have a 'COVID-19 Response Plan'. The COVID-19 Response Plan for St. Gabriel's School is a working document and will be updated frequently in line with the most up-to-date guidelines as issued by the Department of Education. As the advice issued continues to evolve, the protocols and the measures used by the Board of Management and staff may also change.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and reopening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents. The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

## **School Profile**

### **Staff**

63 Pupils  
Administrative Principal  
11 Teachers  
2 Part time teachers  
23 Full time SNA posts  
5 Part time SNA posts  
Part time caretaker  
2 Ancillary staff  
2 Cleaners (contracted after school)  
Bus escorts

### **Classrooms**

10 Classrooms: All classrooms have direct access to toileting and intimate care facilities. All classrooms have a sink with hot and cold water. All classrooms have opening windows and an external door.

## **Roles/Responsibilities:**

The re-opening of our school is a whole-community effort. The Board of Management is responsible for the implementation of this plan. The principal is responsible for the day to day management of the school and therefore will oversee the reopening process.

### **Lead Worker Representative:**

To support the BOM and the management team a 'Lead Worker Representative' (LWR) and deputy LWR will be elected from among the staff body. The LWRs can be taken from any staff cohort.

Mary Stenson will be our 'Lead-Worker Representative'.  
Catherine Troy will be our 'Deputy 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 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.

## **Induction Training**

All staff undertook and completed COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to school in August 2020. All new staff employed subsequent to this date, in any capacity, are required to complete the COVID-19 induction training. Staff will be encouraged to review the training each year or when new resources are made available. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have a full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- The latest and 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 or she should immediately seek guidance from the principal, who is supported in this role by the Board of Management.

Staff will be encouraged to review the training videos.

New members of staff will be required to undertake and complete the induction training videos prior to starting in the school

New staff members will be required to read the St. Gabriel's School COVID-19 Response plan before starting in the school

### **Procedure for Returning to Work**

1. All staff will be contacted by the Principal/ Deputy Principal
2. In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete an electronic Return to Work (RTW) form. A RTW form should be completed and returned three days before returning to work. If a staff member is unable to complete an electronic RTW form they should complete a paper copy
3. 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.
4. All staff will verify that they have engaged with and understood the
  - i. St. Gabriel's Covid-19 Response Plan
  - ii. St. Gabriel's Risk Assessments to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19
  - iii. Induction training videos from the DES/ HSE

### **Further school closures**

1. An all staff meeting via Zoom will be hosted by the Principal before the return to school. Staff will have an opportunity to contribute and ask questions about the return to school
2. A new RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Schools should request staff (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.
3. The principal will make clear any updates to procedures and routines in the school.

### **People at Very High Risk**

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.

[Circular 42/2021 Details the arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools](#)

[Guidance from the HSE for people at very high risk \(extremely vulnerable\) is available here.](#)

Where the OHS previously categorised an employee as 'Very High Risk' at any time before or during the 2020/21 school year, the COVID-19 Health Risk Categorisation Report expired on 30th June, 2021.

For the 2021/22 school year, having considered the HSE advice, the HSE Guidance for the education sector and information available on the OHS website, an employee who believes he/she is at very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19 must: a) complete the online OHS COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire immediately and submit it to the OHS. This Questionnaire which is available on the OHS website must be accompanied by a completed 'Report from Treating Consultant'. Where such a Report cannot be obtained from the treating consultant within a short timeframe, a copy of the latest treating Consultant's Report can be obtained from the employee's GP. The Report from Treating Consultant template is available on the OHS website. b) inform the employer immediately, or on diagnosis, that he/she believes they are in the 'very high risk' group.

An employee who is over 70 years of age should also submit a COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire to the OHS, before they can attend the workplace.

Having considered the medical information provided with the 'OHS Risk Assessment', the OHS will provide the employee with a 'COVID-19 Health Risk Categorisation Report' which advises whether he/she is at a very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19.

As knowledge of COVID-19 has increased, some medical conditions that previously placed an employee in the 'Very High Risk' group now place them in the 'High Risk' category or the 'Normal Risk' category.

Based on the HSE Guidance for the education sector, the OHS will take account of whether the employee has 'significant vaccine protection' at the time of the OHS assessment. As part of this assessment, where the employee assessed as 'Very High Risk': (a) Does not yet have 'significant vaccine protection', he/she will be categorised as 'Very High Risk' and the employer must facilitate alternative working arrangements i.e. work from home. (b) Has 'significant vaccine protection' he/she will be categorised by the OHS as 'High Risk' and must attend the workplace, if medically fit for work.

Certain immunosuppressive conditions and treatments may affect the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. The OHS will take account of this when carrying out the 19 COVID-19 health risk categorisation assessment and may alter the categorisation described at paragraph above.

For an employee, where the 'OHS COVID-19 Health Risk Categorisation Report' advises that he/she is at a very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID19 and consequently must not attend the workplace, the Declaration Form at Appendix E must be completed by the employee and returned immediately to the employer accompanied by the OHS COVID-19 Health Risk Categorisation Report. In accordance with DPER guidance, where an employee has been categorised as 'Very High Risk' by the OHS and is medically fit for work, the employer should prioritise alternative working arrangements to the maximum extent possible e.g. working from home.

### **People at High Risk**

The 'high risk' group is defined by the HSE and in accordance with this advice, an employee in the 'high risk' group who is not ill must attend the workplace. The employee in the 'high risk' group should take extra care to practice social distancing and hand hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment.

### **Pregnant Employees**

The HSE has recently published 'Education Sector Guidance on Employees in the COVID-19 Higher Risk Categories, including Pregnant Employees'.

A pregnant employee who has any of the medical conditions as listed on the HSE website under 'Very high risk groups (extremely vulnerable)' should follow the process as detailed at paragraph 4.1, with regard to a COVID-19 Health Risk Categorisation assessment.

Based on the HSE Guidance for the education sector, a pregnant employee up to 14 weeks gestation, who is medically fit for work can attend the workplace, unless they are categorised by the OHS as 'Very High Risk' due to an underlying medical condition unrelated to their pregnancy.

The recent HSE Guidance for the education sector advises that all pregnant employees submit a COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire to the OHS before the end of their first trimester. The process as detailed at paragraph 4.1 should be followed.

Based on the HSE Guidance, the OHS will take account of whether the pregnant employee has 'significant vaccine protection' at the time of the OHS assessment.

From 14 weeks gestation, a pregnant employee who: (a) Does not yet have 'significant vaccine protection' and has no underlying medical condition, will be categorised by the OHS as 'High Risk' and must attend the workplace, if she is medically fit for work. (b) Does not yet have 'significant vaccine protection', and has an underlying medical condition, she will be categorised by the OHS as either 'High Risk' or 21 'Very High Risk', based on the most up to date HSE advice for higher risk groups. Where the employee is categorised by the OHS as 'High Risk' she must attend the workplace, if she is medically fit for work. Where she is categorised by the OHS as 'Very High Risk', she remains available for work and the employer must facilitate alternative working arrangements i.e. work from home.

Where the pregnant employee, assessed as 'Very High Risk': (a) Has 'significant vaccine protection', she will be categorised by the OHS as 'High Risk' and must attend the workplace, if medically fit for work.

Where the pregnant employee, assessed as 'High Risk': (a) Has 'significant vaccine protection', she will be categorised by the OHS as 'Normal Risk' and must attend the workplace, if medically fit for work.

There is a statutory obligation on the employer to carry out a workplace pregnancy risk assessment on an employee as soon as they are notified that she is pregnant.

Certain immunosuppressive conditions and treatments may affect the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. The OHS will take account of this when carrying out the COVID19 health risk categorisation assessment and may alter the categorisation described at paragraphs above.

For a non-COVID-19 related high risk pregnancy, where an employee is medically unfit for work, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme will apply i.e. pregnancy related illness provisions.

### **Pregnant Employees Working in a Special Education Setting**

Based on the HSE Guidance, it is recognised that a different workplace risk may arise in special education settings due to employees finding themselves working in intimate environments and where social distancing is more difficult. The characteristics of special

education settings warrant greater care with respect to the placement of pregnant employees.

A pregnant employee from 14 weeks gestation, who is categorised as 'High Risk' by the OHS, not be required to work in an environment which meets the following criteria: (a) A Special Education setting which means a special school or a dedicated special class within a mainstream primary or post primary school; with (b) the presence of three or more employees in a single room, throughout the working day; and (c) where social distancing between the employees in the special education setting is not consistently possible.

Where it is concluded that the above criteria apply to the working environment of the pregnant 'High Risk' employee, following a workplace risk assessment carried out by the employer, she will be relieved temporarily from attending this special education setting, during her pregnancy.

In this regard, in the case of a special education class in a mainstream school, the employer must prioritise the re-assignment of the pregnant employee, who meets the criteria set out above, to a role within the school, outside of this special education setting. An existing employee within the school, whose current role is outside this special education setting will then be re-assigned to the special education class.

In the case of a special education setting in a special education school, the employer must prioritise the re-assignment of the pregnant employee to an appropriate role, that is consistent with the employee's contract, outside of this special education setting if possible. An existing employee within the school, whose current role is outside this special education setting will then be re-assigned to the special education class. In circumstances, where the employer can demonstrate that this re-assignment is not possible, the employer must facilitate alternative working arrangements for the pregnant 'High Risk' employee during this period i.e. work from home. For a pregnant employee working in a special education setting who cannot be reassigned as outlined at paragraph 4.5.5 and consequently must not attend the workplace, the Declaration Form at [Appendix F](#) must be completed by the employee and returned immediately to the employer.

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

The school has developed a risk assessment to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19

The school is reviewing our emergency procedures to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement. The school will also review our 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 assessment will be documented and incorporated into the school safety statement.

### **Signage**

Signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene has been printed and displayed throughout the school in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

Procedures to follow in the event of a student presenting with symptoms of COVI-19 in school are displayed in each room.

Procedures to be followed when a student is admitted to the isolation room are displayed at the entrance to the isolation room

### **Changes to classroom and school layout and to school routines**

Bubbles and Pods. A class bubble is a grouping that stays apart from other classes as much as is possible. The aim of the system in school is that pupils only mix with their own bubble from arrival in school in the morning until the pupils go home at the end of the day. Due to the small class sizes in St. Gabriel's, bubbles and pods are essentially the same thing. There are 10 bubbles within the school.

Movement between bubbles is to be severely restricted to and only permitted for staff who work with children in different bubbles. Strict sanitising will be enforced in any area prior to any pupil or bubble entering an area of learning (e.g. the sensory room) outside of their own bubble

Each bubble will keep a contact log (for irregular contact) for students in the class e.g. OT appointment.

#### **Classroom Layout**

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, primary schools and special schools should:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing
2. Keep the room clear of any unnecessary furniture, shelves etc on the walls
3. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing

**The teacher's desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.**

#### **Relaying messages**

As much as is possible, all messages should be relayed via email or by telephone with the class concerned.

#### **School Transport**



The transport manager has organised the buses and bus escorts. Bus escorts will receive appropriate update to their training regarding COVID-19

Bus may be staggered to facilitate social distancing within the school.

### **Arrival and dispersal**

Bus arrival times may be staggered to facilitate social distancing at beginning and end of the school day. Buses will have assigned entry points

#### **Arrival:**

Buses will arrive at school at 08.45. Bus drivers and escorts will bring the students to the designated entry point for each student. The majority of students will enter the classroom through their external classroom door. Students who need to enter via a different route will be brought to a designated entry point and an SNA will meet them to bring them through the school.

Parents bringing their children to school must bring them to the assigned entrance at the assigned time this must be arranged in advance.

#### **Parents must only bring their children to school with prior permission. Parents will not be allowed inside the school building**

Teachers must be in their classrooms by 08.50 ready to greet the cohort of students to arrive.

#### **Home time:**

Bus Escorts and Drivers must pick up their students at 14.30 from the assigned entry/ exit point. SNAs will bring students to the assigned point through the school. Some buses will depart slightly earlier, these students will be picked up at 14.20

Teachers must wait with their students in the classroom until they have all departed.

#### **Room Changes**

The former staffroom has become the isolation room. The new staff room is the former HE/PE/ Dining room, a much larger space that allows for improved social distancing. The new staffroom Will only be accessible to staff at break and lunch times in a socially distanced fashion.

A limit of 20 persons will be allowed in the staff room. **Masks should be worn at all times**, unless eating or drinking at a desk

#### **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing can be usefully applied 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 this issue. Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning.

In the Department's roadmap for reopening, it is 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 pupil 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, where possible, to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.** A distance of 1m should be maintained between desks or between individual pupils.

The following measures will be in place to facilitate social distancing:

- Where possible work stations should be allocated consistently to the same staff and pupils rather than having spaces which are shared.
- In as far as practical staff and pupils must remain within their class. In order to provide adequate supervision levels staff and substitute staff might be required to rotate to other classrooms. To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same class although this will not be possible at all times due to supervision and care needs.
- The objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Bubbles as much as possible.
- The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping mix only with their own Bubble from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day.
- Sharing educational material should be avoided/minimised where possible.
- Any materials that need to be shared should be appropriately sanitised before they are passed on.
- Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) should be discouraged.
- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

## **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school**

### **Staff**

- A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.
- If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible should be achieved

- Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks etc. Each class has its own rota for staff breaks, please be aware if the staffroom is becoming over crowded and highlight this to the principal
- Staff meetings will be held in small groups, in large spaces or online to facilitate physical distancing.
- Staff are requested not to gather in groups within the school premises before or after school. Staff are welcome to go directly to their classroom if they wish to work at school. For example, teaching staff may use their classroom for planning and preparation.
- Unless otherwise specified Croke Park hours must be carried out within the class.
- Staff can rotate between areas/classes but this should be minimized where possible.

### **Corridors**

- Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.
- We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when in the corridors. Directional arrows and vinyl floor tape are in place as visual reminders for staff and pupils. To minimise traffic in the corridors, pupils will enter and exit through their designated entry and exit point.

### **Additional Measures to Limit Interactions**

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, as previously mentioned hand shaking, and high-fives and hugging will not be allowed.

### **Doors and Windows**

Where practical, doors within the corridors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces and increase ventilation.

### **Ventilation**

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools' The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance 2 provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while pupils are taking breaks in the yard. Additional outdoor movement breaks will be encouraged in order to give the opportunity for classrooms to be ventilated.

Some classrooms have been provided with Carbon Dioxide monitors. These help to indicate air quality within the room.

Doors from classrooms to corridors should remain closed.

### **Lunches**

Lunch boxes and drink bottles/containers must be washed and sanitised **at home** on a daily basis to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19. Pupils will eat their lunch in their own classrooms in school, with the exception of students with special feeding arrangements. We will also sanitise them after use in school.

Proper hand washing and sanitisation of desk areas (cleaned with sanitising spray and paper towels) should be ensured for by staff before pupils begin their lunch. Sharing of drinks and lunch items will not be permitted under any circumstances. Parents and staff should remind pupils of this rule where applicable.

### **Home economics and PE**

The home economics and PE teachers will attend the bubble to deliver their lessons. Classes will no longer go to the dining hall. Extra class sets of equipment for both Home Economics and PE will be provided. These will be washed after use and will remain, boxed, in the classroom until the following week.

### **Toys**

All toys should be cleaned on a regular basis for example weekly. 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. When we purchase toys we choose ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary). If cloth or soft toys are used they should be machine washable. Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils and those with special educational needs may be inclined to put into their mouths should be capable of being washed and disinfected. All play equipment should be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned 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 where used should be for individual use only.**

### **Uniforms/Tracksuits**

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families.

As a school we strongly advise that pupils should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities.** We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms and tracksuits. Uniforms should be worn every day, except on P.E. days, or when otherwise requested by teachers.

Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the pupil arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

### **Principal's Office**

Appointments to see the principal or any staff member should be made with the Principal in advance by phone at (061) 302733.

As far as possible, if a staff member wishes to meet the Principal, they should arrange a meeting in advance.

### **Photocopying**

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided – the sanitising spray should not be applied directly on the photocopier. Staff waiting to use the photocopier should ensure they are adhering to Social Distancing of 2m.

### **ICT**

Devices should be cleaned before and after use.

### **Substitute Teachers and SNAs**

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form, confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction Training and complete the contact tracing form in addition to the regular child safeguarding arrangements, before they enter a classroom. Our substitute teachers will come from our own panel of substitute teachers in the first instance.

### **Visitors to the school.**

All visitors to the school will require a prior appointment. If parents need to collect their child for any reason, they are asked to phone ahead or notify the teacher via Aladdin

Where possible the external classroom doors will be used.

All visitors to the school, including delivery drivers will be asked to complete the school's 'contact tracing log'.

### **Visitors to the classroom**

As far as is possible visitors to the classroom should be prearranged.

### **Students leaving the classroom**

Students who are leaving the classroom for feeding will be brought by an SNA to the nursing entrance. There will be a one way system through nursing. They will be met at the door. When the student is ready for collection nursing staff will call the classroom and SNA will collect from the other door.

Staff and pupils should wash/ sanitise their hands whenever they enter or leave the classroom

Students with appointments eg. OT: SNAs will bring the student to the door and the clinic/ clinical staff will take the student from there and return them to the same place. Classrooms/ Bubbles will keep a log of irregular contact.

### **Parent/ Teacher Meetings/ communication**

Parent/Teacher Meetings and Pupil Support Plan meeting will be facilitated via Zoom or over the phone. A suitably convenient time will be arranged in advance.

We will be encouraging email as a primary means of communication instead of hand written notes.

Staff can use Aladdin to communicate with families

### **Staffroom**

The new staff room is technically able to accommodate 25 persons allowing for 2m physical distancing. However it has been agreed to limit this to 18 persons

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings / visors should be worn. Staff will be taking breaks together within their Bubbles as much as possible. Staff members must bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and cannot share utensils in the staffroom.

Staff meetings will be held remotely in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

### **Teaching and Learning**

We appreciate the time and effort that went into Remote Learning by families and school staff, and we recognise the challenges that Remote Learning presented. We are very proud of the collective effort each member of our school community put in during this time, but we cannot wait to get back to the classroom.

We ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the pupils during the return to school.

### **Supporting the Learning of Pupils who Cannot Attend School**

If a pupil is not able to attend school for an extended period of time due to medical reasons, the class teacher will provide work to support the pupil's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians. Please speak to the Principal if you have any concerns.

### **The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

#### **Masks**

**Masks must be worn at all times, except when eating and drinking. Face masks should conform to a minimum EU standard of EN14683. The school has a supply of face masks available for staff (and visitors). Staff are free to provide their own face masks**

The pupils are not required to wear masks or face coverings.

The current guidelines from the Department of Education and Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) recommend the use of visors for staff who are interacting with pupils with Special Educational Needs and Hearing Loss. Visors are recommended as cloth face coverings would hide facial expressions and make communication more difficult. Visors will be provided to staff members and pupils who wish to wear them.

For the most-part, with the exception of face coverings or visors, staff members are not required to wear other PPE. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used throughout the day due to the nature of certain work activities. This includes roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Assisting with eating

- Administering First Aid

## **Gloves**

Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs, assisted eating or administering First Aid.

There will be an emphasis on appropriate and regular hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

## **Hygiene and Cleaning**

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at main entrance, in each classroom and along corridors close to entrances

Alcohol- based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

High frequency touch points will be cleaned at regular intervals throughout the day.

The sensory and calm rooms will be deep cleaned after use by each group. A rota will be drawn up to accommodate the cleaning regime between each use

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 their classroom or work area. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day as well as intermittent cleaning during the day.

All bins will be emptied regularly throughout the school day.

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

The newly established cleaning protocols for the housekeeper and cleaning team will be communicated by the Principal and In-School Management Team. A written cleaning schedule and checklists will be adhered to and monitored.

## **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 this regard and 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 COVID19, 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.

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.

Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- 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

### **COVID 19 Related Absence Management**

Covid-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

If a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In the first instance the support teacher will act as the substitute teacher. In the second instance, if the principal is available, he will act as the substitute teacher in the class for the day. If this, or a combination of these alternatives, is not possible the classroom may need to close for that particular day.

### **Substitution.**

A register of substitute teachers and SNAs will be maintained. Circular 45/2020 along with DES information note 08/2020 outline the system for substitution and the updated instances where a substitute teacher can be employed by a school.



Substitute teachers will be asked to complete a return to work form and the contact tracing log in addition to the regular child safeguarding arrangements. They will be provided with the necessary PPE. All teachers are asked to have a timetable of work ready for the substitute teacher in the case of an unforeseen absence.

### **Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

We are all delighted to be back at school and we love to see all of our pupils every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep pupils at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms.

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

Staff must not attend school if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms.

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

A designated isolation area has been created in the former staff room area.

If a **staff member** displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform a member of staff in their classroom or Bubble that they are feeling unwell. The Principal/Deputy Principal should then immediately be informed.
- The person displaying symptoms should immediately go to the isolation room/ home if well enough to do so.
- A staff member will accompany the individual to the designated isolation room, 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. All doors will be opened for the person displaying symptoms.
- The staff member who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises. The member of staff who accompanies the person presenting with symptoms should don the following PPE: goggles/ visor, disposable face mask, apron, disposable gloves. After the accompanying person is finished with the PPE, they should doff the equipment and place it in a sealed bag and place it in the foot-pedal bin in the Isolation Area.
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home 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. The person presenting with symptoms will continue to wear a mask until they have left the premises. They should not remove their disposable mask until after they have left the building.

- 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.

If a **pupil** displays symptom of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- The pupil displaying symptoms should immediately be brought to the isolation room by a staff member. Contact the Principal/Deputy Principal/ Office immediately.
- A staff member will bring the pupil to the isolation room, making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic pupil at all times. All doors will be opened for the pupil displaying symptoms.
- The pupil who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. **To help us in this regard, parents and guardians are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date and that they are available to be contacted at all times.**
- Provide a mask (if appropriate) for the pupil presenting with symptoms and closely monitor them while wearing the mask. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises. The member of staff who accompanies the person presenting with symptoms should don the following PPE: goggles, disposable face mask, long sleeved apron, disposable gloves. After the accompanying person is finished with the PPE, they should doff the equipment and place it in a sealed bag and place it in the foot-pedal bin in the Isolation Area.
- Facilitate the pupil presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home. Advice where appropriate will 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. The pupil presenting with symptoms will continue to wear a mask until they have left the premises. They should not doff their disposable mask until after they have left the building.

- If the pupil is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a parent/guardian, 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. Pupils will not be able to return home on the school bus
- 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 and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

School staff must not inform families or other individuals outside of the classroom with the exception of the Principal.

It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

An isolation room kit including the following items will be placed permanently in the isolation room: face masks, tissues, hand sanitiser, infrared thermometer, gloves, disposable aprons, plastic bags, sanitising spray, blue roll, spare visor, goggles.

## **Well Being**

### **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

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

Under the 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 schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

# St. Gabriel's School

## Covid-19 Policy Statement

### COVID-19 Policy Statement

St. Gabriel's 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
- 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 with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- 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 advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

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

## St Gabriel's School

### Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19 -

This questionnaire must be completed by staff in advance of returning to work.  
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 Principal: Derek Cox      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 to restrict your movements at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised by your doctor or the OHS that you are in the very high-risk group? If yes, please liaise with your doctor and Principal re return to work.		
7.	Are you or have you been working in a care setting, e.g: disability, nursing home, hospital, 1:1 care in the home?		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating, awaiting results of a COVID-19 test or 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 will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

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

## **What to do if Covid Symptoms Develop at School - staff**

### **If you get any symptoms at work:**

Phone the Principal/ Deputy Principal or the nearest member of the Covid Response Team immediately. Follow their guidelines and advice

You will need to:

- Isolate immediately from other staff
- Wear a face mask
- Keep a distance of at least 2 metres from others
- Phone your GP to arrange a test for corona virus

Go home as soon as it is safe to do so. Self isolate at home

Do not use public transport of any kind to go home

If you cannot go home immediately:

- Arrange transport home as soon as possible to reduce the amount of time in the building
- Remain self isolating in the building (isolation room)
- Avoid touching people, surfaces and objects
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues when you cough or sneeze. Bin these tissues in a waste bag separately to general waste.

### **St. Gabriel's Covid Response Team Members:**

Derek Cox - Principal

Cathy Cooper – Deputy Principal

Catherine Troy – LWR deputy LWR

Mary Stenson - LWR

# **St. Gabriel's School**

## **Suspected case of COVID-19**

### **Procedure**

You should be familiar with the symptoms related to COVID-19

If a child presents with any new symptoms **you must do the following**

- 1. Ensure that the child is separated from any other individuals in the classroom. Do not let them touch any further people, surfaces or objects.**
- 2. Notify other members of staff in the classroom.**
- 3. Don PPE : Mask, Visor, Apron, Gloves.**
- 4. Provide a mask for the child if appropriate.**
- 5. Take the child to the isolation room using the shortest route possible.**
- 6. Another member of staff in the classroom should notify the Principal – Tel: 151/ 0838583998**
- 7. When you reach the isolation room follow procedures displayed.**



# **St. Gabriel's School**

## **Suspected case of COVID-19**

### **Procedure**

You should be familiar with the symptoms related to COVID-19

If a child presents with any new symptoms **you must do the following**

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- 4. Provide a mask for the child if appropriate.**
- 5. Take the child to the isolation room using the shortest route possible.**
- 6. Another member of staff in the classroom should notify the Principal – Tel: 151/ 0838583998**
- 7. When you reach the isolation room follow procedures displayed.**