`Covid Response Plan 2021/22

***St. John’s School Protocols for return to school with regard to COVID-19***

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***1.0 Rationale:***

We aim to maintain a happy, healthy, and safe learning environment in which children are enabled, taught and encouraged to have respect for themselves, each other and for school staff and property.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that provision be made throughout the school community, to discourage any and all behaviours that are considered inappropriate or potentially dangerous to the health and safety of others. In stating the foregoing, we are very conscious of the intellectual limitations of some pupils, and the fact that more severely disabled children may not be in control or have a developed sense of responsibility: allowance will be made in individual cases.

***2.0 All members of the school community, staff, pupils, and visitors are expected to:***

* Follow HSE guidance instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
* Use elbow or a tissue to cover mouth & nose when sneezing or coughing
* Dispose of tissues properly
* Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands
* Inform the Principal if experiencing any symptoms of coronavirus, or suspect that another person at school is.

***3.0 Environmental Arrangements in the School to prevent-COVID -19***

* Each classroom operates within its own bubble, with no cross over between pupils in the other classrooms in as far as possible.
* Five health and safety zones RED (Room 2, 11 and 12), BLUE (Room. 6 and 7), GREEN (Room 3, 4,and 5), YELLOW (Room 8,9,10 and Cookery Room), PINK (Secretary Office, Principal Office, Kitchen) .
* The teachers and SNAs in each zone are assigned specific roles in their zone e.g. arrival and dispersal of pupils, checks on hygiene practices etc.
* **Decreasing Interaction**. This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. Staff from each class to collect pupils from their own class as much as possible. There will be marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Zones will have different mid-morning and lunch-time access to the various playgrounds.
* Each classroom has its own toilet either within its classroom or nearby. There will be no sharing of toilet facilities as far as possible by other classrooms unless they are in the same zone. Each toilet will have soap and paper hand towel with pedal bins for disposal.
* There will be wall hung sanitiser placed outside each toilet area.
* There will be sanitiser within each classroom.
* There will be wall hung sanitiser at each entry point to the school.
* Classrooms are readjusted to allow for greater social distancing. This includes making use of every available space in the school so that students are divided.
* Our school meals will be provided in the classrooms delivered in an efficient manner in line with HASAP guidelines. Trolley’s will be purchased to assist this operation.
* Additional Covered Outdoor Learning areas will be provided in order to get regular breaks from the classroom. This includes an awning, outdoor steel covered structure, outdoor seating and improvements to playground areas.
* Additional Laptops and Equipment will be purchased to assist with social distancing.
* Area will be provided for photocopier so that it is not in secretary’s office.
* Sensory area will be made more central within school so that pupils are not crossing zones.
* Additional resources will be bought for classes as there will be minimal sharing of resources
* There will be improvements made to cleaning equipment in the school and hours of cleaning staff increased.
* School caretaker has been employed and hours subsequently increased to cater for workload.

**4.0 Double Making Situations**

* Staff will double mask for intimate care situations (particularly aerosol generating activities)
* Staff will double mask in areas that are not well ventilated e.g disability toilet.
* Staff will double mask on school bus, if they are mixing with another zone.

***5.0 Additional Pupils’ Responsibilities:***

* Follow altered procedures and instructions for safe arrival and departure from school;
* Follow instructions around bubbles both in class and during breaks;
* Stay in one’s seat as much as possible
* Only share equipment by direction of staff;
* Keep work area neat and tidy;
* Not share drinking bottles, food, etc.
* Use toilets one at a time, ensuring that hands are washed properly (20 seconds, with soap) and dried before returning to their place

***6.0 Additional Parents/Guardians’ Responsibilities:***

* Support the school in its policy of temperature testing pupils prior to alighting the bus or at the entrance to the school.
* Follow altered procedures for arrival and departure or collection of child from school.
* Provide masks for your child if they are over 13 (if they will not wear a mask this is okay)
* Ensure your child changes their clothes on a regular basis, daily if possible.
* Support the school by reinforcing guidance and teaching children hand hygiene, personal distancing, and respiratory etiquette;
* Stay outside of the school building except where they have made an appointment by phone or email to meet staff.
* If dropping or collecting students please keep interactions to a minimum.
* **Keep pupils who are unwell at home, informing the school by email/phone of the type of illness being experienced, until a full recovery is made**. **It is very important not to send a child who is unwell to school as this puts everyone else at potential risk.**
* If, in the opinion of school staff, a child presents with COVID-19 symptoms, the relevant parent/guardian will be contacted immediately with the intention of sending the child home or requesting the parent/guardian to arrange for same. Our hope is that s/he will remain at home until s/he has been checked by a doctor as per our COVID-19 response plan.
* Fill in the return to school declaration form if your child has been for a COVID-19 test or has been sent home with symptoms.
* Please have your mobile phone ON at all times while children are in school; this is in the event of the school needing to contact parents urgently to collect an unwell child or if a positive case arises in the school.
* Be available or arrange to have someone available to collect children if there is a need to send them home due to COVID-19 circumstances arising in the school or on the school bus transport.
* It is the responsibility of parents and staff to follow current protocols with regard to overseas travel.

***7.0 Additional Staff Responsibilities:***

* Support the school in its policy of temperature testing of staff prior to the start of the school day.
* Adhere to and follow all guidelines issued by HSE, DES and school COVID-19 Response Plan protocols and procedures;
* Encourage and practise personal social distancing in all school areas;
* Wear a mask or visor when working in close proximity with pupils
* Keep the work area and school materials and equipment clean and tidy and disinfected regularly.
* Ensure that pupils practise hand hygiene at all appropriate times (before eating/when entering classroom/after toileting/after using shared equipment etc).
* Teach pupils to co-operate and learn the new routines and hygiene practices and support their re-connection with school life in a positive, empathetic way;
* Liaise with Lead Worker Representatives/team on any issues of concern that need to be brought to management
* Staff will be required to fill in the Return to Work Form/text or message the school 3 days prior to starting back.
* Staff will be required to complete an induction on Back to School Protocols.
* Staff Canteen usage will be limited to 10 people at a time.
* The Board of Management acknowledges their duty of care to all employees. Unvaccinated staff have a personal responsibility and legal requirement to ensure they comply with all guidelines and school covid protocols.These protocols will be clearly explained to all staff. If anyone has any concerns re school protocol they are to raise these with the Board of Management. Any concerns are to be addressed under the Health and Safety Statement If a risk assessment is deemed necessary the Board of Management will consult the HSE for advice.

**8.0 Ventilation**

* Windows are to be opened first thing in the morning. They are to be opened fully during any period of absence from the room e.g. Breaktimes, P.E. times.
* They are to be left ajar at all other times of the school day.
* The school will monitor CO2 levels with the 5 monitors received.

**9.0 Transport**

* All Pupils will be assigned a specific seat on school bus/taxi. This will be put on a seating plan and handed to Principal. If there is a change of driver or bus a new plan must be done.
* Taxis/Buses must be well ventilated.
* The school policy is to temperature test pupils prior to alighting the bus.
* Students must maintain physical distancing if possible on the bus/taxi
* Students will, if possible wear face coverings on the bus/taxi.
* Bus Driver and Escort must wear face covering.
* If possible avoid placing a student in the front seat behind driver.
* For excursions on the school bus the same rules apply (ie. allocated seating, physical distancing, ventilation and masks on at all times).
* Wherever possible students will travel in their ZONES only on the school bus.
* A seating plan must be done for each journey on the school bus.

**10.0 Visitors to the School**

* All visitors to the school premises are required to fill in a contact tracing form. Visitors are required to prearrange their visit in as far as possible.
* Observations and assessments by visiting personnel must be in conjunction with our school Covid Protocol and procedures.

***11.0 Actions that impact on health and safety of Pupils and Staff:***

* The school’s aim is that all staff and parents will ensure that, in so far as possible, pupils are taught the procedures set out above and that pupils will be encouraged and supported at all times to follow such procedures in a calm, supportive and proactive way so that potential risks are minimised.

Due to their potential impact on the physical and psychological health, safety and well-being of other members of the school community, the following will be discouraged at all times:

* Deliberately ignoring guidance on:
  + personal space and distancing
  + hand hygiene
  + respiratory etiquette (e.g. failing to cover mouth/nose when coughing/sneezing, not properly disposing of used tissues, etc)
  + zones at playtime for pods/bubbles
* Coughing or spitting at or towards any other person;
* Biting another person;
* Any deliberate action which may endanger the safety and well-being of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour;
* Any action, in which a child persists after instruction or correction by staff, which may endanger the safety and well-being of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour;
* The consequences for such behaviours will be considered by Management and occurences drawn to the attention of the child and his/her parents. Due to the increased health & safety risks associated with COVID-19, we hope that parents will appreciate the efforts we must make at school to discourage such behaviours. Whilst our focus will be on positive support programming for our students, as a staff we will endeavour to move quickly and firmly in emphasising how serious such behaviours are and the consequences for us all in a child/children engaging in such behaviours: our hope is that any child involved will come to understand the gravity of a given situation or behaviour.
* Depending on individual circumstances, it is possible that parents of children engaging in the behaviours described will be contacted and asked to collect their child from school; the school envisages such contact with parents being resorted to only if the behaviour is persistent despite all staff attempts to reduce same. The school will in this event hold an emergency meeting with all parties involved and come up with a plan for successful reintegration into the school in a manner which is keeping with health and safety.

***12.0 Suspected Cases of COVID-19 in the school***

* If a pupil is suspected of having COVID-19 in the classroom they are moved to an isolation room within the school and parents/guardians are contacted to collect them. In the event that a parent/guardian cannot collect a pupil an ambulance will be called.
* If a staff member is suspected of having COVID-19 they are asked to leave the premises immediately or a family member is contacted to collect them. They will remain in the isolation area until this is arranged.
* Following a suspected case the isolation room will be left idle and well ventilated for at least 3 hours (with a sign put on the door that it is out of use). The cleaner will fog the room that evening once 3 hours have passed.
* Following a suspected case in the classroom all students MUST evacuate the room for 30 minutes. The room must be fogged after 30 mins and then students can return.

**13.0 Infection prevention and Control Measures:**

**\*Please Follow HSE Advise, but do tell them you are working in a Special School and with vulnerable children.**

**13.1 Symptoms**

* Symptoms - All staff and families must be aware not to attend school if they have any symptoms of Covid-19 infection. Symptom profiles are available and we do advise parents to take a precautionary approach, particularly for children less able to articulate their symptoms, that if they seem unwell, to observe them at home and contact their GP as appropriate. We know from our experience that where people had been symptomatic in educational facilities, that was where we identified more close contacts with Covid-19.
* Symptoms include **a fever of 38℃ or over including chills, a new cough (any kind of cough), shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, lost or change to sense of smell or taste, runny or blocked nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea, aches and pains or tiredness, sore throat and headache.**

**13.2 Close contacts**

* Follow up to date HSE advise. https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/

**13.3 COVID Test**

* If you have been sent for a test, please stay out until you receive your results.

**Additional Expenses incurred as a result of our school COVID Plan and Protocol 2021:**

* Fogging machine x2
* Industrial Mop and Steam Cleaner
* Hand towel/Soap/Sanitiser Dispenser
* Sanitising spray and paper towels
* Additional Classroom resources as a result of not inter class sharing.
* Staff room electricals
* Furniture for the yard to encourage use of outdoor space
* Two Outdoor Covered Teaching/Learning and Outdoor Spaces
* Classroom furniture to encourage physical distancing
* Trolleys for moving school lunch around the school
* Equipment for isolation room
* PPE for intimate care
* Conversion of ¾ Hall into classroom space
* Conversion of ¼ hall into a staff room space
* Conversion of Staff Room into a Classroom space.
* Additional Laptops to increase physical distancing
* Outdoor sports equipment
* Severe/Profound Room-Acheeva Bed as activities are reduced due to COVID (Limited travel/not safe to go out on trips).
* Increased school funding for outdoor excursions off site.
* Funding for MAPA as staff cannot cross zones to assist for challenging behaviour
* Funding for First Aid
* Funding for Buccal Midazalom as staff cannot cross zones
* Increased storage spaces bought or built into classrooms for resources
* New lining put on 3 x floors and 2 x toilets.
* New Toilets and cisterns placed into 3 x rooms
* Conversion of room opposite room 8 into a padded sensory space
* Conversion of area in classroom 10 and classroom 4 into a padded sensory space
* Conversion of sports garage into a sensory room
* Conversion of area in lobby into sports hub
* Purchase of equipment to assist with conversions.