



**Caherelly National School**  
**Scoil Náisiúnta Ailbhe**

Grange, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick.



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# Covid-19 Re-opening Policy

## Covid Response Plan

### School Re-opening

# Monday August 31<sup>st</sup> 2020

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## Introduction

As a school community we have successfully navigated our way through what has been the most challenging time in the history of modern Irish education. As we look forward with excitement to re-opening our school on August 31<sup>st</sup> , we need to be aware that there will be challenges ahead.

Our school will operate under new norms. As a school community we will have to adapt quickly to new and revised practices and procedures many of which are detailed in this policy. The Health, Safety and Well-being of all members of our school community is of paramount importance to us all.

Procedures have been put in place in line with HSE and Department of Education and Skills advice and guidance and are subject to change as new advice or the changing needs of our school dictate. All members of the school community, irrespective of circumstance, are expected to adhere fully to the procedures put in place in an attempt to minimize the risk posed by Covid-19. It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

**It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that all members of the school community must adhere fully to the practices and procedures put in place to ensure all of our safety. Any instances of non-compliance will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.**

Each and every individual must play their part. We all have an obligation to do what we can to ensure the safety of our school community. Breaches of procedure by any individual will not be tolerated. Covid-19 poses a serious risk to us all.

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Caherelly NS. The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET). As the advice issued by NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change. 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). 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.

## Aims

**Through the implementation of the practices and procedures as outlined in this policy our school community aims to:**

- Do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school.
- Reduce the likelihood of the spread of Covid-19, insofar as possible, within our school if introduced.
- Detail for all members of our school community on how our school will reopen for all students from August 28th and what the operation of our school will look like so as to be sustainable in a COVID-19 context.
- Balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

## Caherelly NS COVID-19 Policy Statement

Caherelly NS 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 handwashing 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 our **Lead Worker Representative, Geraldine Fitzgerald**, who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners. Geraldine will be assisted by our **Deputy Lead Worker, Sheila Ryan**.

**Signed:**

*Niamh McGuinness (Acting Principal)*

Niamh McGuinness

24/8/2020

## Know the symptoms of Covid-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

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

**Coronavirus COVID-19**

Coronavirus COVID-19 Public Health Advice

**If you have fever and/or cough you should stay at home regardless of your travel or contact history.**

If you have returned from an area that is subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 you should restrict your movement for 14 days. Check the list of affected areas on [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie)

**All people are advised to:**

- **Reduce** social interactions
- **Keep a distance** of 2m between you and other people
- **Do not** shake hands or make close contact where possible

If you have symptoms visit [hse.ie](http://hse.ie) or phone HSE Live 1850 24 1850

**How to Prevent**

- Stop**  
shaking hands or hugging, when saying hello or greeting other people
- Distance**  
you must at least 2 metres (2 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell
- Wash**  
your hands well and often to avoid contamination
- Cover**  
your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue
- Avoid**  
touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean**  
and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

**Symptoms**

- Fever (high temperature)
- A Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Breathing Difficulties

**For Daily Updates Visit**  
[www.gov.ie/health-covid-19](http://www.gov.ie/health-covid-19)  
[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

Infograph is a joint effort of HSE, the Health Service Executive and DfA, the Department of Foreign Affairs

**HSE** **Riann na Míneolaíochta**  
Government of Ireland

## Minimising the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into our school

As a school community we must do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, teacher teacher and teacher-student and must be managed in all settings.

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of the Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors, as far as possible, within the school environment. These control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

**It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all procedures and health and safety requirements.**

### Practices and procedures.

#### Promoting awareness:

- ***All members of our school community will actively promote*** awareness of COVID-19 symptoms.
  - Signage informing members of the school community of the symptoms of Covid-19 and the need for social distancing are displayed at all access points to school grounds.
  - All members of the school community will embed in pupils the need for appropriate respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene.
  - Parents, pupils and staff will adhere to all procedures.

### Signage

Schools will display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. These posters are on display in prominent areas such as entrance gate, offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

### Return to Work

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW) In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically on Aladdin or from the Principal. A RTW form should only be completed at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace. On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide: details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

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

## Return to work safely

### Lead Worker Representative – Geraldine Fitzgerald

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 worker representative) is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the

workplace.

- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

**NOTE:** 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 who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

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.

## 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 will be developed in conjunction with school management.

Caherelly NS will review its emergency procedures involving fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented.

Caherelly NS will review its existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments will be documented.

## 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

**Return to Work Form.** Staff will be required to complete a RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from staff that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.

B.

**Induction Training:** All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

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



Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the Covid-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal.

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

C.

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.

D.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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

Such include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated as appropriate in line with advice from the HPSC. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

Face coverings must be worn by all staff where it's not possible to maintain a distance of 2metres from staff or pupils. In certain situations, clear visors can be considered. If a visor is used it should extend from above the eyes to below the chin and from ear to ear.

Wearing of Gloves: The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

E.

First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Caherelly NS. 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.

### **People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):**

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk. The HSE has set out these groups.

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

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppressive drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

**The advice for this group is available from the HSE.** Staff who are in this group should self declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills.

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

### **People at high risk**

The list of people in high risk groups includes people who:

- are over 60 years of
- have a learning disability

- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
- have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- have high blood pressure (hypertension)
- have diabetes
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- have a medical condition that can affect your breathing
- have cancer
- have a weak immune system (immunosuppressed)
- have cerebrovascular disease
- have a condition affecting your brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, or cerebral palsy)
- have a problem with your spleen or have had your spleen removed
- have a condition that means you have a high risk of getting infections (such as HIV, lupus or scleroderma)
- are taking medicine that can affect your immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- have obesity
- are residents of nursing homes and other long-stay settings
- are in specialist disability care and are over 50 years of age or have an underlying health problem

**Take extra care to follow the advice on how to protect yourself from coronavirus.**

- **practice social distancing where possible**
- **wash your hands regularly and properly**

**Ask the people in your life to take extra care to protect you from coronavirus.**

### **Attendance at school:**

- Members of the school community who display symptoms of Covid-19 **MUST NOT ATTEND or VISIT OUR SCHOOL** and should immediately phone their doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Members of the school community **MUST NOT ATTEND OR VISIT OUR SCHOOL** if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and must follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school must promptly bring this fact to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, as appropriate.
- Staff and pupils must know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school as detailed in Section 8 of the DES Guidelines.
- Everyone entering the school building must perform hand hygiene using hand sanitiser provided at each entrance.

- If pupils are sick they **MUST NOT** present for school.
- Visits to the school by all persons other than staff and pupils will be **by appointment only**. Appointments must be arranged in advance through the school office, by phone on 061 351812 or by email at [office@caherellyns.com](mailto:office@caherellyns.com)
- Each visitor to the school will be required to complete a Contract Tracing Log irrespective of the duration of the visit.
- Parents must drop and collect pupils from the designated entrances and not enter the school grounds under any circumstances.

**The only exceptions to this are:**

- In the case of Junior Infants, one parent/designated person can accompany pupils in these classes for arrival and dismissal for a settling in period. Parents/designated persons **MUST** practise physical distancing of 2m.
- On their first day at school, Junior Infant starting times will be staggered in order to allow two parents to accompany pupils to school if they so wish.
- Physical distancing of 2m should be maintained between staff and all visitors to the school.
- Physical distancing of 2m should be maintained between all adults when on school grounds.
- Visitors and parents are not allowed to wait around the school yard after their child has been dropped each morning or at any time in the afternoons.
- Parents and all visitors are requested to wear a face covering when on the school grounds.
- Adults accompanying pupils to school as detailed above and visitors with pre-arranged appointment **MUST** wear suitable face coverings.

## **Respiratory Hygiene**

All members of our school community **MUST** practise and actively promote good respiratory hygiene at home and at school as this will help protect people around us from viruses such as flu and Covid-19.

**Good respiratory hygiene entails:**

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Disposing of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- Bins will be emptied at regular intervals.

## Hand Hygiene

**All members of our school community MUST practice and actively promote effective hand hygiene at home and at school.**

- Staff and pupils must understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.
- Hand sanitisers are installed, with appropriate signage, at each entry point, in each classroom and at appropriate locations throughout the school.
- Posters are displayed at each hand washing station throughout the school showing effective hand washing technique.
- HSE guidelines on handwashing are available at:  
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>
- All persons entering the school building must perform hand hygiene using hand sanitiser provided.

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

### Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Pupils and staff MUST 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.

## Physical Distancing

**Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.**

Physical distancing will be usefully applied in our school allowing for some flexibility when needed. It will be applied in a practical way that recognises that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing in our school will look different across the various ages and stages of learning.

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 child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down. Staff will wear suitable face coverings while at work.

All adult visitors to the school, as scheduled by appointment, MUST maintain a 2m distance from school staff and wear suitable face coverings.

Our school community is committed to the two principles of physical distancing, namely, increasing separation and decreasing interaction, as a means of minimising the risk of the introduction of Covid-19 to our school.

## Increasing Separation

In order to minimise contact between pupils, insofar as possible, the school will operate staggered arrival and dispersal times as outlined below. We will have extra staff on supervision each morning to help pupils become familiar with these new routines.

### Arrival and dismissal of pupils

#### Arrival of pupils

From August 31<sup>st</sup> there will be staggered arrival and dismissal times for pupils depending on their class level.

**Drop-Offs and Pick-ups:** We will have staggered drop-offs and pick-ups based alphabetically (in family 'pods'). Parents are to observe social distancing regulations at all times. If at all possible, please remain in your car and allow your child/children to walk in independently in the mornings, (exceptions would be Junior and Senior Infants)

9.00 a.m. Children with surnames from A – F  
9.10 a.m. Children with surnames from G – M  
9.20 a.m. Children with surnames from N – Z

At 3 o'clock pick-up, parents should parallel park along by the fence adjacent to the Parish Field or at the Parish Hall. Please observe the road markings and allow space for the children to walk between fence and yellow line. Children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> will leave the school yard, in staggered groups and will be escorted by teachers along the path to parents' cars. We have reminded parents/guardians to be patient and mindful of other children as it will take time to adjust to the new system.

2.55 p.m. Bus leaves

Children for Caherelly Kids and Mary's will leave straight after the bus departs.

3.00 Surnames A – F  
3.05 Surnames G – M  
3.10 Surnames N - Z

- The school gates will open at 9.00 each morning.
  - Children will line up in their class bubbles in their designated area.
  - Juniors, Seniors, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes will enter by the old entrance. Their teacher will call each pod separately and remind them to sanitise as they enter.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> by the new office entrance. They will remain in their pods until their teacher calls them to enter and sanitise.
- Parents **MUST ENSURE** that arrangements are put in place for the prompt drop off and collection of pupils.
  - Parents are asked to practise social distancing guidelines at arrival and dismissal times each day.

**Please note that on the first day back at school it will be different as children need to be coached on how to do this by their teachers. Details of the first day were emailed to parents separately**

#### **Parental responsibilities on arrival/dismissal:**

- Parents must arrive on time for dropping off and collecting their child.
- Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of COVID-19 or who have served the required quarantine time of 14 days where advised are allowed to drop off and collect children.
- Any adult who is in a high risk category should not drop off or collect children in order to protect themselves.
- Parents who are permitted on school grounds must ensure their child remains at their side at all times and that their child does not interact with other children.
- Parents who are permitted on school grounds must wear suitable face coverings
- A drop and go/collect and go policy will be in place. Under no circumstances are parents to congregate on or outside school grounds.
- At arrival and departure times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.

#### **B Decreasing interaction**

## A-Z of school practices and procedures

### Books etc.

- Parents must ensure that all **books/writing equipment** are covered with contact or other wipe able covering ,sanitised using alcohol wipes before being placed in the child's schoolbag.
- Parents must ensure that all of the child's equipment/books/copies are labelled with the child's name as **equipment/books cannot and will not be shared.**
- We are asking parents to ensure your child has a pencil case for home use and another one for school use. The pencil case used at home will not be brought to school and the pencil case used in school will not be brought home.
- For the start of the school year all books will remain in school.

### Clothing

- Parents, please ensure that your child can/teach your child to open/close their own coat and tie their own shoes. Shoes with Velcro should be used where pupils are unable to tie their own.

### Handshaking/Hugging

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

### Home/School Communication

- For the start of the school year communication between home and school will take place electronically using email, and Aladdin.
- Parents may contact the school office if they wish to arrange a phone call or zoom meeting with a staff member. **061 351812** [office@caherellyns.com](mailto:office@caherellyns.com)
- Face to face meetings will only be used in exceptional circumstances.

### Homework:

- Homework will not be assigned until later in September. However, we would strongly encourage each pupil to read as extensively as possible during this time. Teachers will begin assigning homework on Class Dojo in September.

### Hygiene and Cleaning

- Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom and support room, and in offices.
- Liquid soap is available in all toilets.
- Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message. Parents are asked to practise hand washing and sanitising with their children at home.
- In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned by Cleaning Contractors once per day.



- Frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities will be cleaned on a rotational basis during the school day.
- All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

## ICT

- A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common devices. Devices must be cleaned after use and before they are returned for charging.

## Lunches

- Parents must ensure that all **lunch boxes/water bottles** are sanitised using alcohol wipes before being placed in the child's schoolbag. Please ensure their names are on water bottles and lunch boxes.
- **Parents MUST ensure that pupils have sufficient lunch/drink coming to school each morning as we will not be in a position to accept and distribute lunches during the school day.**
  - Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.
  - Please make sure your child is self-sufficient i.e. they can open/peel any lunch/drink you pack for them. Please pay particular attention to any drinks that require a straw.
  - Please make sure they have enough drinks to last them throughout the day as we will not be in a position to refill drinks bottles.
  - Children will eat their lunches at their desks. No food will be allowed onto the yard.
  - All leftovers/waste must be stored in each pupil's lunchbox and must be disposed of at home.

## Office

- We request that parents use e-payments to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled.
- Attendance at school office is by pre-arranged appointment only.
- Pupils will not have access to the office.
- As far as possible, staff members should minimise their entry to the office area.

### **Photocopying**

- Any staff member who uses the photocopier must clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

### **Physical Education and P.E. Equipment**

- Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Teachers will organise lessons that require very little if any equipment. Staff members and pupils will be encouraged to take additional breaks outside during the school day. While these breaks are taking place all windows in the classroom should be opened to allow for ventilation. All PE equipment if used must be sanitised after use.

### **Punctuality**

- It is essential that parents/pupils adhere strictly to the times allocated for arrival and dismissal. Parents of pupils who present late for school must contact the school office by phone to arrange entry to the school. Pupils remain the responsibility of the parents/guardians until they have arranged access to the school.

### **Returning from abroad**

- Children and staff members who have travelled from countries not on the Green List must not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period which commences on the date of return to Ireland.

### **Staffroom**

- All staff members must 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.
- Staff meetings for the most part will be held remotely or in small groups if deemed necessary.
- Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

**We have created a second eating area for staff to avoid too many in the staff room. This area has tea/coffee making facilities and a separate fridge.**

### **Substitute Teachers and SNAs**

- The sequence for covering all teacher absences will be in accordance with DES circular 0045/2020. 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 before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

## Teaching and Learning

- As a school, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.
- Each child will be in a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.
- The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for schools, as we work with all the children during the return to school. Initially there will be a focus on Language, Numeracy, SPHE and PE, and teachers will integrate content from other curriculum areas including the Arts and SESE in line with pupils needs and interests. As advised by the National Educational Psychological Services we will need to **“Slow down to catch up”**.

## Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

- Staff members (particularly Support Teachers and SNAs) may rotate between areas/classes but this will be limited where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.
- In keeping with our Special Education policy, support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal.
- The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble (class).
- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean by the SET teacher in between different pupils or small groups attending.

## Uniforms

- There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is not practical for most families. However, children's uniforms must be clean and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols  
**School tracksuits are to be worn Mon, Wed and Friday. Uniforms are to be worn on Tuesdays and Thursdays.**

## Ventilation

- To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

### **Visiting Teachers/Coaches**

- The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities will eventually be explored. However, it is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time.

## **Wellbeing of the School Community**

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff.

These are promoting:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

- The Stay Safe programme will be taught in all classes at the start of the school year.
- Increased emphasis will be placed in all classes on SPHE / PE and outdoor activities.

## **Staff Duties**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties.

In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.

The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.

B. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.

C. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.

D. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.

E. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.

- F. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- G. Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- H. 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.
- I. Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school. It is proposed that we complete this as a group during staff meeting.
- J. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- K. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

Circular 49/2020 deals with Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary Schools  
[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049_2020.pdf)

### **Covid related absence management**

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be in line with agreed procedures with DES. Circular 49/2020 also deals with Covid related absences.

[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049_2020.pdf)  
Substitution and EPV Days- Information note 08/2020 deals with issues surrounding these topics:  
[file:///C:/Users/OFFICE/Downloads/84095\\_52f1d615-f321-4c29-be01-26dbe91dabbf.pdf](file:///C:/Users/OFFICE/Downloads/84095_52f1d615-f321-4c29-be01-26dbe91dabbf.pdf)

Most days that may not have been covered by substitution in the past will be covered for the school year 2020/21. The first EPV day that a teacher uses may be covered by a substitute. The other days may only be taken if they are not disruptive to the running of the school. Any unused EPV days may be carried over to the school year 2021/22.

### **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 School 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. We aim 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. The staff will be made aware of the dedicated 24 hour/7 days a week free phone confidential phone number that can provide advice on a number of issues that may be worrying them- the number is 1800 411057

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

**We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, if children are sick they must not be sent to school.**

- Parents/guardians must keep children 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 symptoms.
- The inner office is the designated isolation area.
- If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:
  - ✓ The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. The person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.
  - ✓ If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. Parents must make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times. If we are unable to contact a parent/guardian it will be considered a serious breach of Health and Safety.
  - ✓ Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.
  - ✓ A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic.
  - ✓ The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
  - ✓ If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.
  - ✓ Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
  - ✓ If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
  - ✓ The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.
  - ✓ 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.

- ✓ 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.

**This policy was sanctioned by the School Manager of Caherelly National School on 24/08/2020**

Signed: Rev. James Walton

Fr. James Walton

Chairperson BOM

Date: 24 / 08 / 2020

Niamh McGuinness

Niamh McGuinness

Acting Principal Caherelly NS

24/08/2020

## **General Support Websites & Helplines for Parents**

### **Department of Education Website Support for Parents:**

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/guide-for-parents-supporting-children.pdf>

### **Gov.ie Website dedicated to Supporting people during Covid-19 – Section ‘In This Together’ Coping at Home During Covid-19**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/606da7-coping-at-home-during-covid-19/>

### **List of Support Services**

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/news/supports-and-services-during-covid-19.html#young-people>

### **NCSE Parent Resources**

<https://ncse.ie/parent-resources>

### **Department of Children and Youth Affairs Support for Parents:**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/parents-centre/>

### **Psychological Society of Ireland Support for Wellbeing**

<https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/footer/COVID19-Resources>

### **Parenting Tips**

<https://www.covid19parenting.com/englishtips>

### **Understanding and Coping with Reactions to a Pandemic:**

[https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/communitypartnerships/cvtrc/Understanding%20%26%20Coping%20with%20Reactions%20in%20a%20Pandemic\\_386176\\_284\\_28977\\_v1.pdf](https://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/communitypartnerships/cvtrc/Understanding%20%26%20Coping%20with%20Reactions%20in%20a%20Pandemic_386176_284_28977_v1.pdf)



Cover your cough and sneeze poster

