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Dublin 24. Roll no.:19502f

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| *Chairperson:* Mr. James Addie *Principal:* Ms. Ann Marie Blake  *Deputy Principal: Ms Jean McAdam* |

**Scoil Aonghusa Junior**

**Covid 19 Response Plan**

**Updated Aug. 2021 in Response to DES Circular 0042/2021 in line with The Work Safely Protocol (Dept. of Health)**

**School Profile**

185 pupils

12 Mainstream classes

7 Special Education Teachers

1 Support Teacher

1 HSCL teacher (share with Scoil Aonghusa Senior)

Administrative Principal

7 SNA posts

Full Time Secretary

Full Time Caretaker (shared with two other schools on site)

2 Cleaners

**Reviewing the Safe Operation of our School – Infection Prevention Control Measures**

The Board Of Management of Scoil Aonghusa Junior aims to facilitate the continuation of school based teaching and learning and a safe working environment for staff. The operation of schools must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

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 and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene, follow respiratory etiquette and increase ventilation.

*Staff 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.*

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

**School Arrangements: To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19**

* All new staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building.
* 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.
* In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form.
* Schools are required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene
* COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. Our school regularly reviews 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 our school's existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school’s safety statement. Our school regularly reviews 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 and incorporated into the school safety statement.

**Lead Work Representative: Ms Lizanne Reilly**

Deputy Lead Worker Representative: Ms Karen Finn

(see Appendix re responsibilities of LWR on file)

**Access to School and Contact Log Access** to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

* Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.
* The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.
* The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace.
* A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be continue to be maintained. The school maintains a log of staff and pupil contacts.
* All school records and data is maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with each school in their role as data controller.

**Reducing congregating/interactions: Staggered School Hours**

8.50 am – 2.30 pm (6 classes)

9.00 am – 2.40 pm (6 classes)

Due to Junior School Profile, parents/guardians have access to the school grounds **briefly**  to drop off and collect children only. School grounds have two main entrances for parents/guardians. Each classroom has a separate drop off/collection door.

To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to **walk/cycle/scoot to school** if it is at all possible.

All the children will enter and leave the building through their external Classroom doors.

To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the school gate will open at 8.50 a.m. for Group 1 and 9.00a.m. for Group 2.

There will be no congregating or lining up in the school yard at this time. *(Separate, special arrangements will be put in place for our Junior Infants and their Parents at the beginning of the school year.)*

The Board of Management asks you **to abide strictly to your allocated drop off and collection times** in order to keep our children and families as well as our staff as safe as we possibly can.

**Morning**:

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 8.50 a.m..

Children’s start times will be staggered according to their classroom in order to reduce the number of people in the school grounds at any one time. Start time will be 8.50 am or 9am. You will receive further information on your child’s allocated arrival and finish time as soon as possible. **The Board of Management requests that Parents wear a face covering entering the school grounds and that you abide strictly to your allocated drop off time.**

Parents are asked to escort their child to their external classroom door, as swiftly as possible, at their allocated time only. **The Board of Management ask you not to congregate in any way outside your child’s classroom door. Conversations with class teacher cannot be facilitated at classroom door.**

Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival. Other staff members (including the Principal, Deputy Principal / Leadership team) will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to help them to their classrooms.

Parents of children in 2nd class are asked to drop chn to the school gate and allow them to walk independently to their classroom (following settling in period).

**Afternoon:**

*(Special arrangements will be put in place for Junior Infants for the first two weeks of the school year)*

Children’s collection times will be staggered according to their classroom. Collection time will be 1.30/2.30 pm or 1.40/2.40pm. This is in order to reduce the number of people in the school grounds at any one time. **The Board of Management requests that you wear a face covering entering the school grounds and that you abide strictly to your allocated drop off time.**

**Breaktimes**

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

10.40 – 10.50 a.m. Break for all classes. Children eat and carry out physical activity within their own classroom / outdoors

11.50 – 12.00 p.m. Lunch indoors - for Junior Infants & Senior Infants

12.00 – 12.30 p.m. Playtime outdoors - for Junior Infants & Senior Infants. Yard will be divided into six areas – one per class group/bubble

12.30 – 12.40 p.m. Lunch indoors – First & Second classes

12.40 – 1.10 p.m. Playtime outdoors – for 1st & 2nd classes. Yard will be divided into six areas – one per class group/bubble

**Social Distancing**

Physical distancing falls into two categories: • Increasing separation • Decreasing interaction

Pupils

*“Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning. Care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times.”*

We recognise that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Achieving this in a Junior School is not a pre-requisite.

In Scoil Aonghusa Junior we have reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing.

Every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class indoors from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

Within each Class Bubble, children are divided into groups / pods, as an additional measure to further decrease interaction within the class bubble.

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 and updated guidance on face covering should be observed. Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks and alternative canteen areas and equipment etc. Staff meetings should be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Implement no hand shaking policy. Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible. riefly 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.

**Special Education Needs**

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many

instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. Our focus will therefore be on

emphasising that parents/guardians have a heightened awareness of signs,

symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where

symptoms are present children should not attend school.

Staff members (particularly SETs and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized 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.

* 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 in between different pupils or small groups attending.

**Ventilation**

In Scoil Aonghusa Junior we deploy the following measures of good ventilation practices:

* windows open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use

(windows do not need to be open as wide in windy/colder weather in order to achieve the same level of airflow into the classroom. This will assist in managing comfort levels in classrooms during periods of colder weather.)

* Rooms will be well ventilated before class begins each day. This can be achieved by ensuring that at the end of the school day each evening, the windows in each room are opened (as wide as is practical and safe, while also considering security issues) for at least 15 minutes to ventilate the room fully.
* Keeping open the internal doors into classrooms for periods of time may assist with

increasing air movement and ventilation rate. This is called cross ventilation.

* We will provide a CO2 Monitor to each mainstream classroom to ensure quality of ventilation is maintained.

**PPE**

The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education has recommended that face coverings should be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

• Performing intimate care

• Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation

• Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category

• Administering first aid

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

*In childcare and educational settings, the implementation of mandatory face-covering usage is challenging, as it is known that children will have a lower tolerance and ability to use a face covering properly, and use of face-coverings by teachers and staff caring for very young children may cause undue stress to the children*

It is not recommended that children attending primary school wear face-coverings

In certain situations the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with pupils with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

Gloves

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.

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

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

**Hygiene and Cleaning**

35 sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom.

Warm water and soap is available in all the bathrooms, staff bathrooms and staff room.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

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.

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.

Children’s shared materials/resources will be wiped with a suitable cleaning agent between uses

**New & Substitute Staff**

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.

**Parent Meetings**

In order to facilitate meetings, parents will be offered the choice most suitable to their situation, in line with DES and Health guidelines. Meetings can take place in school using face coverings and abiding strictly to socially distancing or alternatively can take place remotely.

**Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time due to Covid 19 related illness/isolation, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child’s learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.

As a school, **all classes will make use of Class Dojo for communicating with parents and/or supporting Home Learning.** This will be especially important if the school, or parts of the school have to close due to HSE advice.

**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 what is known as 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.

**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, 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.

A designated isolation area has been created in the room within the Tiled Hall.

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. If this is not possible, 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. To help us in this regard, **Parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.**

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.

**COVID-19 Related Absence Management**

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

**Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution**

If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil. If a substitute teacher/SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class/pupil to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class/pupil to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

**Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

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’.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

This response plan was agreed and ratified by the Board of Management on 19.08.2020

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

James Addie, Chairperson Board of Management

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

Ann Marie Blake, Principal

**UPDATE 23.09.2021**: The HSE have advised that children of primary school age who are identified as non-household close contacts and who are asymptomatic will no longer be routinely required to restrict their movements, unless advised by Public Health Risk Assessment.

Children who are household contacts will still be required to restrict their movements and will have testing arranged for them by the HSE.

Our focus is now on ensuring that children with new symptoms, consistent with Covid-19, do not attend school, pending GP advice.

It is important to remember than 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.