

St Caillin's NS, Rashina

COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary Schools

Note: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie;

This document has been prepared on the basis of current public health advice and will continue to be updated throughout the year as further public advice is received.

Introduction

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in **Rashina NS**.

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

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

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

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

This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
 - a. School Building
 - b. Signage
3. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)
5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
7. Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19
 - a. Wash your Hands Frequently
 - b. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser
 - c. Avoid Touching your Eyes, Nose and Mouth
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9. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities
10. Hygiene and Cleaning In Schools
11. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
12. Special Educational Needs
13. Staff Duties
14. Covid related absence management
15. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify the same.

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1) Rashina NS COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. A hard-copy of this policy has been signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management. It has also been brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others via our school website; www.rashinans.com.

By creating this COVID 19 Policy Statement, Rashina 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 COVID19 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 in relation to summer provision
- ✓ inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- ✓ adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education and Skills
- ✓ keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ✓ ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- ✓ implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- ✓ provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- ✓ implement cleaning in line with Department of Education and Skills advice.
- ✓ All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This will be done through our Lead Worker Representative: Claire Grehan and our Deputy Lead Worker Representative: Muireann Guinan

2) Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the work must be

done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

Details for the reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

a. School Buildings:

Before reopening schools in the new school year, schools are reminded to check the following:

- ✓ Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaires disease? Yes
Legionella which causes Legionnaires Disease is a common bacterium which may be found in many environmental water sources and is often associated with hot and cold water distribution systems.
- ✓ Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again? N/A
- ✓ Have bin collections and other essential services resumed? Yes

b. Signage :

Schools will be required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The following is a link to the dedicated area of the Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC) website where there are a number of posters, including those appropriate for primary school pupils, located. Irish versions are also available here.

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/>

Schools can download the posters and display in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffrooms, classrooms and toilets. Schools do not need to do this now as the posters may be updated and further information will issue on signage closer to planned reopening.

3) 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 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.

Staff are requested (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.

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.

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work.

Note: Induction Training for staff will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff. This form will be given to staff the week starting the 10th of August and will only be accepted on/before Friday the 28th as staff will return to work on Monday 31st.

4) Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lie 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.

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, they should contact the lead workers who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Name of Lead Worker representative: Claire Grehan

Name of Deputy Lead Worker representative: Muireann Guinan

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.

5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings has been completed.

It is important that schools review their emergency procedures involving fire safety, first aid, accidents and take into consideration any new risks that may arise due to COVID-19. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures have been documented.

We have also reviewed our existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. All changes have been documented.

6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

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

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a school is to minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place.

This can be achieved through the following measures:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors. Links to information will be uploaded on our website; www.rashinans.com for parent(s)/guardian(s)/staff throughout the months of August and September.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Advise staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test
- Advise staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified by the HSE 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.
 - Advise staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
 - Everyone entering the school building will be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
 - Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and will be received at a specific contact point (The main entrance-hall).
- Staff, pupils and visitors should, at all times, adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website - <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
 The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. **Rashina NS** will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner and this will be communicated to all staff and parents/guardians before we reopen via our website/text. There is a buzzer on the front door at Reception to restrict any visitors from arriving into the building unannounced/those who do not have a prior appointment etc. All other entrances will be secured from the inside.

The Department has been working closely with the HSE and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) to develop health advice which has been tailored to the needs of schools in order to support schools in planning for reopening in autumn. The link to the Interim Public Health recommendations for the reopening of schools can be found here (Add LINK).

The advice will continue to be updated in line with public health advice generally and will inform the development of more detailed guidance for schools by the Department of Education. <https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/interim-recommendations-for-the-reopening-of-schools-and-educationalfacilities.pdf>

7. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

a) Wash your Hands frequently

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing: For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

b) Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of hand sanitisers (when hands are clean). Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities. These are available at entry and exit points and in each classroom in our school.

There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

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

c) Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

d) Physical Distancing

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

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 2 for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.

Note: Guidance on the physical distancing requirements will be informed by public health advice for schools and will be updated when necessary.

e) Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19. Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

f) Do:

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

g) Do Not:

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

Signs/posters are placed in the Staff Area to remind all staff to bring their own cup and utensils and to clean the area they have used.

h) 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, which 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, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - 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.

8. 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 our 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:

(i) 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. 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.

(ii) 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, 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 link to training will be sent to all staff prior to the reopening of school and it will be completed again as a group as questions may arise.

(iii) Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Guidance documentation and information posters are available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters are prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staff area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

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

(iv) Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Medical Grade Masks

Schools must provide medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and teachers in special schools and special classes and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs including School Bus Escorts.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre).

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

The wearing of a visor/mask must be considered where there is a concern that physical distancing cannot be maintained/ there will be prolonged close contact and/or that exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets is likely.

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.

(v) Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made.

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

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. Staff need to remember to do their own work spaces. In the general areas, each person is responsible for cleaning the area they touch and use as they go along, including photocopiers etc. We have plastic chairs in the staff area so staff can wipe them after use. Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

There will be a regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

(vi) Access to the school building /contact log

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

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.

The 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 maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and students contacts.

(vii) First Aid/Emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in **Rashina 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.

9) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

The Department will work with stakeholders to provide more detailed advice on certain school activities in advance of school reopening.

Choir/Music Performance

Due to the high-risk of this activity, we will not be having choir between bubbles/ schools. Singing in the classroom will continue in short intervals and with ventilation.

Sport Activities

Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

Shared Equipment

Toys - All toys will 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 will be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.

When purchasing toys, teachers will choose ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary).

If cloth or soft toys are used, they will be machine washable.

All play equipment will be checked for signs of damage, for example: breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned, they will be discarded.

Clean toys and equipment will be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions will always be followed.

At this time soft modelling materials and play dough, where used, will be for individual use only.

Cleaning Procedure for Toys

- Wash the toy in warm soapy water, using a brush to get into crevices.
- Rinse the toy in clean water.
- Thoroughly dry the toy.
- Some hard plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher.
- Toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried.
- In some situations toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning. For example: toys/equipment that pupils place in their mouths, toys/equipment that have been soiled with blood or body fluids or toys where a case of COVID-19 has been identified.
 - If disinfection is required: A chlorine releasing disinfectant should be used diluted to a concentration of 1,000ppm available chlorine. The item should be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

Art – Where possible, pupils will be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies supplied by the teacher.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards will be cleaned between use. All iPads have wipeable covers to facilitate cleaning.

Musical Equipment/Instruments – To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between pupils and, if sharing is required, the instruments will be cleaned between uses.

Library Policy – Where practical, pupils will have their own books. Textbooks that are shared have been covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Pupils will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

Shared Sports Equipment – Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people. (No guidance from the D.E.S to date regarding the cleaning of equipment yet)

10. Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

The Department of Education will provide additional funding to schools to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19.

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and will be covered in the induction training. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of suspected cases of COVID-19. Schools are asked to carefully read and understand the cleaning advice and to apply that to all areas of the school as appropriate.

Schools are reminded to take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for hand washing and toilet facilities.

In summary, each school setting should be cleaned at least once per day. Additional cleaning, if available, should 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 will thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day. There will be a regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility. Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was Present

The room will be cleaned as soon as practically possible.

Once the room is vacated, the room will not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always in addition to cleaning.

The persons assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning

and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.

Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).

Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.

Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a staffroom, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

11. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following outlines how **Rashina NS** will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

School staff should be encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. This designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Rashina NS the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
 - Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times
 - Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
 - Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor 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

- 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 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.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff confidentiality is essential at all times.

The following items are available in the Isolation Room:

1. tissues
2. hand sanitiser
3. disinfectant/wipes
4. gloves
5. masks & visor
6. long sleeved aprons
7. disposable paper aprons (white)
8. pedal bin
9. waste bags

The Isolation Room has a window for ventilation

12) Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should 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.

Similarly, staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

Hand hygiene

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.

Equipment

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment, for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

The following points can guide the development of such cleaning schedule:

- Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean.
- Care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Cleaning is generally achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water.
- Equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child e.g. toileting aids;
- If equipment is soiled with body fluids:
 - ✓ First clean thoroughly with detergent and water;
 - ✓ Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant;
 - ✓ Rinse with water and dry.

13. 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:

- (i) 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
- (ii) Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- (iii) Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- (iv) Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid19.
- (v) Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- (vi) If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- (vii) Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- (viii) 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.
- (ix) Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior

to their return to school.

(x) Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.

(xi) Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with the same.

Updated Staff Duties – March 2021

- Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
- 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.
- 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 in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

14. Covid related absence management

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

15. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal.