



Covid-19 Reponse Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of

St. Mochta's National School

Introduction

We have compiled this plan for the safe reopening of St. Mochta's N.S. This plan is a living document and will be subject to ongoing review and amendments. The health, wellbeing and safety of all of our staff and children will be central to all decisions made. This 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 the school environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for St. Mochta's N.S. to meet the Return to Work Safety Protocol, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

Children will return to school for all five days of the school week, this is on the assumption that it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills.

Children from Senior Infants to 6th Class will return to school on 27th August 2020 and Junior Infants on 31st August 2020. Classes will operate within a 'class bubble' system, this will allow interaction between different classes and children in different classes to be limited as far as possible.

Upon return to school there will be a particular focus on Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), mental health and wellbeing and Physical Education. We will be teaching the children about the new procedures in our school. The Department of Education and Skills has produced a document – 'Supporting the Wellbeing of School Communities as Schools Reopen: Guidance for Schools.' We will be following the guidance outlined in this document to support wellbeing for everyone.

We will be sending a short video to the children before school starts. The video will explain all of the new procedures for the safe entry and exit to our school. It is hoped that it will reassure the children and reduce any anxiety about their return to school.

Planning & Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management of St. Mochta's N.S. aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace will be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education and Skills.

Arrangements are in place to keep up to date with public health advice and to pass this information in a timely manner to staff, parents, and pupils. All staff have been provided with the Return to Work (RTW) form and must complete this 3 days before they return to school. **The Health and Safety Statement has been updated and a CoVid-19 Risk assessment has been carried out.**

Induction Training

All staff in St. Mochta's N.S. will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to school. Specialised additional training will be undertaken by SNAs, cleaners and the Lead Worker Representatives.



The aim of this 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
- An understanding of this Covid-19 response plan.

Staff will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

The LWR will work in collaboration with the Principal and the Board of Management to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and monitor adherence to those measures and will be involved in communicating the health advice around Covid-19 in the workplace.

The Lead Worker Representative in St. Mochtas' N.S. is **Mr. George Mc Adam (Teacher)** and the Assistant Lead Worker Representative is **Ms. Fiona O'Neill (SNA)**.

The role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;



- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Signage

St. Mochta's N.S. has displayed signage outlining the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and signage to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. These can be seen on corridors throughout the school and at the sink area in each classroom. There is also signage to remind everyone to walk on the left side of corridors etc.

Access to School and Contact Log

There will be no access to the school for parents or visitors without a prior appointment. Parents will need to telephone or email the school where required. Arrangements for necessary visitors will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have prior approval from the Principal. A detailed sign in/ sign out log of those entering /leaving the school will be maintained in compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Acts.

Control Measures

- The following 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:
- Staff and pupils that have symptoms should not attend school, should phone their doctor and should follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Staff and pupils should not attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and should follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and pupils who develop symptoms at school should bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Staff are familiar with the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day will be by prior arrangement and will be received at a specific contact point in the reception area. Where possible, visitors will be emailed a copy of our Covid-19 response plan in advance of their visit and will be expected to follow all of the measures in place to help prevent the spread of the infection.
- Physical distancing (of 2m) will be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.



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

Respiratory and Hand Hygiene

Staff and pupils are encouraged to follow good respiratory and hand hygiene.

Good **respiratory measures** include the following:

- ❖ avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
- ❖ cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
- ❖ dispose of tissues in the nearest bin.

Pupils and staff should perform **hand hygiene** at the following times:

- 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 in the Classroom

Where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance from children 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. A face covering will be worn where a distance of 2m is not possible.

It is also 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.



CHANGES TO CLASSROOMS

- Teaching space will be clearly marked. The teachers will have a space around their desk that can't be accessed by children.
- Tables will be 1 metre apart and all classrooms will be set up in line with the guidelines from the Department of Education & Skills.
- Children will be assigned to pods within their classes. Teachers will allocate the pods and we ask you please to respect the decision of the teacher in this regard. It may not be possible to seat friends together. We thank you in advance for your understanding. Children will be allowed to play with any of their classmates while on the yard.
- Students will be asked to regularly wash their hands including but not limited to, entering the classroom, before eating, before and after going on yard.
- Each classroom has 3 sinks for handwashing and will have a hand sanitiser.
- Physical distancing is required in all classes from 3rd to 6th classes. It is recognised that it is not possible for children in the younger classes to maintain physical distancing throughout the day.

Additional measures to decrease interaction include:

- Interactions on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas will be limited
- There will be a staggered timetable for the PE halls to avoid contact between class bubbles.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be eliminated.
- Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it will be organised to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource.
- Staff and pupils will avoid sharing of personal items.
- Children will be encouraged to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth).
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device will be cleaned each time after use and hand hygiene encouraged.

ENTRY TO SCHOOL

Children only will be allowed on the school campus. The only adults on the school site will be the staff. This decision has been made in the interest of public health. It is important that everyone co-operates with this and we thank you in advance for your support. The only exception is for parents in the younger classes (infants to 2nd classes) who can collect their children from the yard and ball court from a 2m distance at the end of the day. Children are encouraged to walk or cycle to school where possible.

School will be open from 8.30am and children will go directly to their classroom. There will be full supervision by school staff at this time. **Please drop your child at the pedestrian gates on the Clonsilla Road and Porterstown Road and ensure your child is carrying their school bag, lunches etc as they enter the school premises**



- 5th and 6th classes to arrive at 8.30am with their younger siblings.
- 3rd and 4th Class to arrive at 08.40am with their younger siblings.
- Remaining junior children to arrive at 08.50am.

We want to avoid large numbers gathering and will be using 3 different points of entry. There will be hand sanitiser at each entrance for children to use.

- **Junior Classes** will enter via the main pupil entrance.
- **3rd and 4th classes** enter via the gate beside the ball courts and walk upstairs to their classroom.
- **5th and 6th classes** will enter via the entrance at the PE hall and to use the stairs beside the PE hall.

This system will enable all classes to start their lessons at 08.50am each day.

SET DOWN AREA

The set down area will be open for parents to 'drop and go'. **Parents cannot park their cars here or exit their cars at drop off times.** You are welcome to drive into the set down area and park so children can exit the car safely. Please then exit the set down area **immediately.**

BREAKTIMES AND YARD

To allow for social distancing on the yard, times will need to be allocated to accommodate 4 morning breaks and 4 lunch breaks.

We will be implementing the following timetable:

Jnr & Snr Infants	3rd & 4th Class	1st & 2nd Class	5th & 6th Class
10.00 – 10.20am	10.25 – 10.45am	10.50 – 11.10am	11.15-11.35am
11.40 – 12.00pm	12.05 – 12.25pm	12.30 – 12.50m	12.55-1.15pm

- The yard and ball court will be divided into 4, using cones and tape, to allow a class/bubble to play in each quadrant.
- Children will have much more space for their break times. There will be no walk and talk break. The children should be able to enjoy 40 minutes of active play during break times each day.
- This system will allow 2 class groups to be on yard at any one time.
- Classes / bubbles will play in the same designated space each day.
- Each class / bubble will have a designated door and stairs for entry and exit to avoid any crossover of bubbles.



STAGGERED EXIT FROM SCHOOL

There will be staggered finish times so that children can exit safely and to avoid large gatherings.

1.30pm	Junior and Senior Infants.
2.20pm	1 st and 2 nd classes.
2.25pm	5 th and 6 th classes.
2.30pm	3 rd and 4 th classes.

- **Junior & Senior Infants** can be collected from the **Infant Yard** at 1.30pm. Parents/Guardians should walk to the end of the white school building on the Clonsilla Road. Entry to the yard will be behind the PE hall. Please enter via this gate and follow the one-way system to collect your child and exit via the ball court gate
- **1st Class and 2nd Class** can be collected from the **Ball Courts** at 2.20pm. Parents/Guardians should walk to the end of the building on the Porterstown Road. Entry to the yard will be at the end of the building, then turning right to the Ball Courts, collect children and exit the one-way system via the Ball Court Gates leading to the drop-off area.

Parents should adhere to 2 meter physical distancing at all times on the school campus.

- **3rd and 4th Class** students will exit the building at 2.30pm via the **Pupil Entrance door**. **Please agree a safe location outside the school campus with your child to meet them after school. The Clonsilla Inn is available to parents in the afternoons.**
- **5th and 6th Class** students will exit the building at 2.20pm via the door at the **PE Hall**.

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.
- All staff will enter and exit the building via the main reception only.
- Staff will sign in and sign out daily. This will form part of our Covid-19 contact log and may be used for contact tracing purposes.
- 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 will be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks. The layout of the staff room has been adjusted so that all chairs are 2m apart.
- Staff meetings will be held in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Some meetings may be held remotely.
- There is a no hand shaking policy.
- Staff can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimised where possible.
- SNAs and SET teachers will be working in a number of classes/bubbles.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The following PPE equipment has been ordered for St. Mochta's N.S.:

- Visors for all staff.
- Individual Packs will be made available to all staff – including antibacterial spray, cloths, antibacterial wipes, mini-sanitiser, gloves and disposable masks. All staff are responsible for ensuring their own work spaces are kept clear, clean and sanitised.
- Free Standing automatic sanitiser pumps for the three pupil entrances and the staff/visitor entrance.
- Additional soap, hand towels and sanitiser have been ordered.
- HSE approved signs on hygiene etiquette, washing hands, etc., have been printed and are displayed in each classroom and around the school.
- Perspex has been ordered for all classrooms, SET rooms, First Aid area and school office.
- Additional cones and tape have been ordered to divide the yard into four zones.
- Stakes for the grass to indicate 2 metre distancing for parents when collecting younger children. These will be used outside in areas where parents are asked to line up.
- Footprint stencils have been ordered to paint 1m distances on the paths where children line up each morning.

Hygiene and Cleaning in St. Mochta's N.S.

The cleaning regime in our school will be enhanced to minimise the risk of Covid-19. We will be following the advice set out by the HPSC and all cleaners will undergo specialised induction training. This training sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected cases of COVID-19.

The Board of Management has employed an additional cleaner to work in our school during the school day. This new role will focus on regularly emptying bins, cleaning toilets, handrails and touchpoints throughout the school day. An additional cleaner has also been employed for after the school day to ensure our enhanced cleaning regime is carried out to the highest possible standard. Table tops will be cleaned on a daily basis. Every room in the school will also be cleaned daily. This includes all SET rooms. Tigers Afterschool Care will be using the hall after school each day and this area will also be cleaned thoroughly on a daily basis.

The school will purchase additional sanitising machines that may be used where required. This will not replace cleaning and will be an additional safety measure when needed.

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

- The room will be cleaned as soon as practicably 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 done as well as cleaning.
- The person assigned to cleaning will avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and will wear household gloves and a plastic apron.
- The environment and furniture will be cleaned using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product .



- Special attention will be paid to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, 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 hall, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas will be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

COVID-19 SUSPECTED CASE

- **Any pupils or staff members with suspected Covid-19 symptoms should not come to school.**
- If a child develops Covid-19 symptoms during the school day, procedures outlined in the roadmap will be followed.
- Your child's temperature may be taken.
- The procedures will be explained to the child in a child friendly manner.
- The child will be brought to an Isolation Area accompanied by a member of staff and will be reassured and comforted.
- The parent / guardian will be contacted immediately and will be expected to collect their child as soon as possible. Please ensure emergency contact details are updated on Aladdin Connect. **Parents cannot be emergency contacts**, a third party is required. If the school is unable to make contact with a parent / emergency contact, an ambulance may be called.
- The child will be encouraged to wear a face covering when in a common area with other people or exiting the building – please explain this to your child.
- The child will be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the child is well enough to go home, they will be transported home by a family member as soon as possible. The child can be collected from the Staff Car Park.
- An assessment of the incident will be undertaken, which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- Any person sent home with a suspected case of Covid-19 must seek medical advice from a G.P. A child / staff member cannot return to school without permission from a medical professional.

If the school is notified that an adult or child in a child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the parents/guardians of all children in the class will be notified and public health advice will be sought and followed.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

- Pupils with additional needs will continue to be supported by class, resource and support teachers and SNAs.
- Withdrawal groups will be small and from the same class bubble.
- Movement breaks will be in line with best practice and guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills.



Staff Duties

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.



CHANGES TO GENERAL PROCEDURES

- Movement in general within the school will be kept to a minimum
- All pupils and staff are asked to walk on the left side of corridors.
- **Parents and guardians will no longer be able to access the building, including Reception. All contact must be via phone and email. Thank you in advance for your support with this.**
- Should pupils have essential appointments, parents should park in the drop-off zone and once outside reception ring the school. **Face coverings should be worn by parents at all times when on the school campus. A physical distance of 2m should also be adhered to at all times.**
- On wet mornings children will enter the school as usual. Pupils should always bring appropriate clothing for inclement weather – the school will not be in a position to facilitate wet-day collections from classroom doors. **We would encourage children to leave a spare raincoat in their classroom.**
- Please ensure that children have their bags, schoolbooks, stationery and lunches as the school can no longer accept any forgotten items at Reception.
- Children will wear their uniform as usual. There will be flexibility in wearing the uniform and school tracksuits so that parents are not under pressure to wash uniforms.

TRAVELLING TO IRELAND FROM A LOCATION THAT IS NOT ON THE COVID-19 GREEN LIST

We would ask parents / guardians to adhere to Government travel advice. **You are requested to restrict your movements for 14 days** if you arrive into Ireland from another location that is not on the COVID-19 Green List.

This includes:

- Irish citizens coming home
- people with no symptoms
- people who have tested negative for the virus in another location

SCHOOL COVID-19 POLICY

St. Mochta's N.S. has a COVID-19 policy. This policy outlines the commitment of our school to implement this Covid-19 response plan and to help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy has been signed and dated by the Chairperson of our Board of Management, Ms. Valerie Haslam and Principal Ms. Maria Farrell. It is available to view in the 'School Policies' section on our aladdin connect app.

Maria Farrell
Principal

Valerie Haslam
Chairperson

August 2020