

# Le Chéile NS Covid Response Plan August 2020



This is a living 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) or [agreements with education partners as appropriate for primary and special schools](#). -

This plan has been collaboratively devised with the BOM and In- School Management Team of Le Chéile NS, and will be communicated to all staff and parents. Any updates or amendments will be communicated to you via the school website, social media, Whatsapp and SMS.

**NB:**

Please read this plan very carefully, sign and return the form in Appendix 2 to [lecheilens@gmail.com](mailto:lecheilens@gmail.com) prior to your child's return to school.

## **1) Introduction**

COVID-19

Covid -19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a new (novel) Coronavirus virus called CoronavirusSARS-CoV-2.

This Covid 19 Response Plan has been developed in line with public health advice issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and in compliance with the “Return to Work Safely Protocols” developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). It is the intention of Le Chéile National School Board of Management in accordance with all relevant guidelines to identify the steps that will be taken to do everything practical to minimise the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into Le Chéile NS and to identify the steps that will be taken to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the school itself while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time.

In addition to being a place of learning, Le Chéile NS is also place of work. The purpose of this document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation through the prevention, early detection, and control of COVID-19 in school. This document provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, pupils, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of education for the health and wellbeing of pupils and society as a whole.

## 2) **School COVID-19 Policy**

Le Chéile NS's COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus.

### School profile:

Class	Teacher	Number of pupils *	SNAs/Childcare Worker	SET Teacher
Early Start	Liz Maxwell	15	Sharon Noonan	
Junior Infants	Eadaoin Cummins	12		Elaine Butler
Junior Infants	Pauline Stack	12		Elaine Butler
Senior Infants	Tina Frost/Elaine Cassidy	16		Niamh O'Sullivan
First Class	Niamh O'Dwyer	17	Leo Wong	Niamh O'Sullivan
First Class	Conor Sheahan	16		Margaret Nolan
Second Class	Katherine Madden/	19		Gillian Ryan

	Marian Considine			
Third Class	Shane Donoghue	22	Gráinne Ryan	Laura Quirke
Fourth Class	Emily Durack/Grace Brosnan	25		Tracy Savage
Fifth Class	Jennifer O'Neill	16	Carol Litherland	Michael McNamara
Fifth Class	Karen O'Sullivan	14		Michael McNamara
Sixth Class	Margaret Ryan	20		Gillian Ryan
ASD Junior	Claire O'Donovan	6	Angela Rodgers & Majella Sheehan	
ASD Senior	Eva Drew	6	Sylvia Clancy & Caroline Balfry	`
EBD	Ailish O'Byrne	8	Fiona O'Donoghue	
HSCL	Eoghan O'Byrne			

Principal	Anthony Fitzgerald			
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All sanitising precautions necessary will be taken when integration from units takes place in mainstream classrooms and reverse integration takes place from mainstream classrooms into Units. Units teachers will keep parents informed in this regard. They will also be in touch to clarify which Units class your child is in this year.

11 mainstream class teachers

7 Special Education Teachers

2 ASD class teachers

1 EBD class teacher

1 Early Start Teacher

1 HSCL Teacher

7 SNAs – 6 Full Time Posts, 1 x 0.5 Post

2 Cleaners – 15 hours per week – 3 hours per day.

1 Secretary

1 Childcare worker

1 Caretaker

1 Principal

**Facilities**

There are 11 mainstream classrooms.

There is 1 Early Start classroom.

There are two ASD classrooms and 1 EBD class.

There are 8 SET rooms.

The main reception area also houses the secretary's office.

The principal has an office.

There is a PE halla in the main building.

There is a hall area in the new wing.

All classroom toilets are ensuite.

There are male, female and wheelchair accessible toilets on the ground floor.

There is a wheelchair accessible toilet on the top floor.

The staffroom will be situated in the hall in new wing to facilitate all staff members socially distancing.

The secretary's office is protected by a glass screen.

The school has a fob access system and a PA system.

There are three sets of stairs and one lift to the first floor.

The school has three zoned areas for yard space. The courtyard and grass area is Zone

1, basketball courts are Zone 2 and tarmac area is Zone 3.

We have access to a playing pitch to the front of the school also.

**Additional challenges:**

- Space for social distancing in the yard, on corridors and in classes.
- Integration from our ASD and EBD classes into mainstream classes poses difficulties with mixing class bubbles and pods. (System in place of withdrawing children from the same class/POD at any one time.
- Shortage of substitute teachers in the event of staff absence is concerning. We are no longer in a position to split classes up and take care of them in different classrooms. Every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher, however in the event of this not being possible or where the school is not entitled to employ a substitute, the SET assigned to that class will step in. Teachers will have a work plan prepared, arranged and left with the principal in the event of either a planned or unplanned absence.
- Insufficient SNA access for all mainstream classes is also concerning – we must share SNAs between class bubbles and pods to ensure all children with SNA access receive SNA support. We need extra SNAs in the school however this has not been sanctioned by the NCSE. At present we have 2 full time and 1 part-time SNAs to meet the need of our pupils with care needs in our mainstream classroom. We will do our best to meet the needs of all pupils with care needs, however parents need to be aware of the limitations imposed on the school in this regard and understand that SNAs are shared between a number of children in a class bubble. No personal pupil information has been shared here so as to



not breach GDPR, but the breakdown of SNA and SET access in each room has been specified to give the full picture to parents of the SEN supports available in our school, and the measures we have taken to allocate our resources to meet our pupils needs as safely and realistically as possible. This is the absolute best we can do within our circumstances and we ask parents to be aware of this.

- All schools may have a number of vulnerable pupils and staff members that fall into the 'at risk' category and will follow all protocol and NPHE advice in this regard.

### **Assumptions**

School will re-open for all pupils on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2020

#### ***New school hours***

*9.00am-1.40pm Infants*

*9.00am – 2.30pm First to Third classes*

*9.00am – 2.40pm Fourth to Sixth classes*

*9.00am-11.30am Early Start Morning Session*

*12.00pm- 2.30pm Early Start Afternoon Session*

**Please read the following information very carefully and be clear on the plan for your child:**

**Both Junior Infant classes** will start at 9.30am and go home at 11.30am for the first two weeks. This will then be reviewed.

Early Start sessions will be an hour long for the first two weeks. This will then be reviewed.

Unit teachers will communicate finishing times for their pupils to Units parents depending on the needs of the pupils as they settle back. We aim for usual finishing times as soon as is practicable and beneficial to our Units pupils. A period of re-integration to school is necessary to ensure a successful transition back to class for all pupils.

### **Drop off and collection times**

Unfortunately it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come in to the school building and in most cases parents will leave their child at the school gate. To minimize the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not enter the school grounds before the school doors open at 8.50am.

### **Morning**

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 8.50am. Parents are asked to drop at assigned doors from 8.50am (**children will not be permitted to enter the school gates before this time**), preferably by parking outside of the school and walking their child to the entry point, where a member of the school staff will meet them. Parents are asked to respect social distancing and also to wear masks when dropping and collecting their children. **Parents are not permitted to remain standing outside the school gate.** This will require the cooperation, patience and respect of all working together. As always we urge care and consideration in driving and parking outside of the school.

Staff are asked to check their temperatures at home prior to arrival at school. If temperature is above 38 degrees Celsius, contact your GP for advice.

- Unit pupils – enter the school via the Units gate and entrance – whether from the bus or parent drop off. Unit pupils will be given a set seat on the school bus beside either a sibling or a child from their pod or bubble. This is not negotiable, and we ask for parents support and understanding in this regard.
- Junior and Senior Infants enter through the courtyard and use the door straight ahead
- First Class enter through the courtyard and use the door to the right-hand side
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and 3<sup>rd</sup> Class enter through the red door to the right-hand side of the courtyard
- 4<sup>th</sup> Class and Ms O’Neill’s 5<sup>th</sup> class enter through the side door of the halla
- Ms. O’Sullivan’s 5<sup>th</sup> class and 6<sup>th</sup> class enter through the main door.
- All pupils will use the sanitising stations just inside their entrance doors. If a specific type or brand of sanitiser is needed for your child due to irritation etc, **parents are expected to provide this to the school in advance please.**
- Pupils will be directed to hang their coats on the back of their chairs and be seated immediately.
- **School bags and pencil cases are to remain in school.** Parents will need to have a second pencil case and supplies at home for their child/children. There will be NO HOMEWORK for the month of September and this will be reviewed

accordingly.

- Collections times at home time will be staggered slightly to ensure safe dismissal from school. See below...
- In advance of the school reopening all class teachers will contact parents to discuss any specific concerns or decide specific arrangements with medicine/inhalers etc that need to be made.

### **Summarised Timetable for Drop off and Pick up**

**8.40am** - All staff to be on site.

**8.50am** – Staff to be ready for arrival of children.

**8.50am – 9.00am** – Arrival of pupils – Stop, Drop, Go system. No adults to enter the school building. After sanitising, children are to go straight to their classrooms on arrival.

**1.40pm** – Stop, pick up, go –Senior infants - Pupils will be brought to the main entrance where parents/guardians will meet them and go home. Parents please remain mindful of social distancing and masks at this time.

**2.30pm** – Stop, pick up, go – 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Classes – same protocol

**2.20pm** - Stop, pick up, go – 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Classes – same protocol

**Where a family has children in different collection times, all children go home at the earlier time.**

**Please ensure that ALL pupils have a good coat with a hood.**

Pupils will have performed hand sanitising before leaving the school building. Parents may wish to repeat this once the pupils get into their own car. You are advised to remove school clothes immediately upon arriving at home (see uniform advice).

### **Breaktimes**

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

The yards will be separated into zoned areas and each class will have a specific play area. Classes cannot mix with other classes at break times. Physical barriers have been put in place to ensure this. Our supervision rota has been amended to reflect these changes also to ensure adequate cover.

**Zone one:** Juniors and Seniors (10.30am & 12.30pm)

First and Second (11.00am & 1.05pm)

**Zone Two:** Third and Fourth Class

**Zone Three:** Fifth and Sixth class.

Parents will need to discuss this plan with **their** children  
Children will be **required** to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

**This practical break plan ensures that most break times do not have to be staggered, pupils are kept safe and also ensures minimal disruption to the school day and teaching time.** Parents will need to discuss this plan with your children and remind them that they cannot mix with friends or sibling in other classes at break times.

Children will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

Integration from Units into mainstream classes will be carefully and safely managed in a controlled environment. Until further notice, this is the school policy with break times and classes. Please do not get anxious about the stringency of this plan and how formal it appears – it is in line with Covid 19 guidelines for schools and is in the best interests of all. Pupils will still be able to have fun with their classmates in their bubbles and mix with their siblings and other friends in their own time outside of school hours.

### **3) Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

The BOM aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

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

Before reopening schools for the 2020/21 school year, Le Chéile NS will have a process in place to include the following:

- Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates.

- Arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required.
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- Identified a Lead Worker representative
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout if necessary to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment;
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment
- Made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school
- Reviewed the school buildings
- Induction Training for all staff members

#### **4)Returning to work**

##### **4.1) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)**

form and a return to work safely form.

#### **4.2) Lead Worker Representative**

This person is teacher Niamh O’Sullivan. A Deputy Lead Worker has been appointed from our non-teaching staff – Angela Rodgers. Together with Deputy Principal Eoghan O’Byrne, these staff members comprise the school Covid 19 Response Team. Staff have been provided with further information in relation to this.

#### **4.3) Signage**

Le Chéile NS will display signage provided by the Department, with age appropriate key health messages outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID- 19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Le Chéile NS will display the posters in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

#### **4.4) Making Changes to School Layout**

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

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interactions 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 from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the day.

#### **Junior Infants to Second Class**

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble.

#### **Third Class to Sixth Class**

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in the classroom in order to be 1 metre away from one another. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

#### **Doors and windows**

As much as is possible, all internal doors will be left open to aid with ventilation and minimize hand contact with common surfaces. 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. Windows should be open to provide optimum ventilation.

#### **Toilets**

Each classroom has their own internal toilets. Good hand hygiene will be practiced after using the toilet and the toilets will be sanitized daily.

### **4.5) Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. Le Chéile NS have reviewed our emergency procedures and risk assessment to consider any new risks that arise to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

### **First Aid/Emergency Procedure**

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in schools. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, schools will call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident.

### **4.6) 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 or deputy principal. The department of education has furnished school with contact tracing logs and visitor sign in forms. Le Chéile National school will get visitors to fill these in.

The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centers 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. Please see our parent staff communication policy for further details.

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 pupil contacts.

## **5) Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools**

The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, adult-adult and adult-student and must be managed in all settings. One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the 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 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. 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.

***How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:***

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms

- ✓ Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- ✓ Advise staff and pupils not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- ✓ Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;

- ✓ Ensure that staff and pupils know 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;
- ✓ Physical distancing (of 2m) will be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.
- ✓ Masks will be worn by all adults where 2m social distancing cannot be maintained. Visors may be worn by school staff in addition to a mask where close contact with pupils or adults is essential.
- ✓ Masks will be worn by all visitors to the school – there by prior appointment only.
- ✓ We will use PE time to teach skills and engage in training occasionally within individual classes.

### **Lunches**

Lunches will be provided by the school. If a child wants to bring their own lunch to school, they must bring it in a hard container. It must be sanitized prior to bringing it to school. Please remind your child not to share their food or drinks with other children. Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice.

### **Books, copies, pencils etc**

Books and copies are supplied by the school. Children should use their own pen, pencils, etc

and should not share with other pupils

### **Uniforms/Tracksuits**

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this may not be practical for most families.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities.** Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

### **Office**

Caíona will be in the office but we ask that you ring or email the school with messages if possible. If you wish to leave a message for a member of staff please do so by ringing her on 061-310744 or email [lecheilens@gmail.com](mailto:lecheilens@gmail.com). Alternatively, contact the HSCL teacher.

It is not appropriate to attempt to communicate with the secretary on her entry/exit from work.

### **Photocopying.**

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

### **ICTs**

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley. Computers in classrooms will be sanitized between users and at the end of each school day also.

### **Visiting Teachers/Coaches**

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities such as GAA, rugby, soccer, basketball, etc. will be explored if and when relevant. However, it is not recommended that children from different classes would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time..

### **Breakfast and After School Clubs:**

These activities will be on a scaled back basis. Children will again be in bubbles according to their classes.

### **Substitute Teachers and SNAs**

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.

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

Physical Education lessons will take place outside where possible.

Staff members and pupils may take additional breaks outside during the school day, particularly movement breaks.

### **Parent/ Teacher Meetings**

Parent/Teacher Meetings will take place via phone this year or a secure online platform as appropriate.

### **Staffroom**

All staff members should 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. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

Staff members will sanitize their lunch containers.

Staff will remove all personal items from the staffroom after use.

### **Teaching and Learning**

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Remote Teaching and Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that this presented for all families.

Each child will be 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. A significant period of re-adjustment, revision and assessment will be necessary to progress with curriculum and individual education plans. This will be a marked difference from previous years, where summer assessments, standardized tests etc. informed our planning for the new school year. We ask parents to be cognisant of this and give teachers the professional time and space needed to settle pupils back into school while caring for their holistic needs – learning and wellbeing.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school

### **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 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 and safely into a nearby bin.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

#### ➤ **Hand Hygiene**

Staff and pupils will understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Schools will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

See the Handwashing routine and video on the H.S.E guidelines. 1 minute 13 one.

Covid 19 response plan Le Cheile National School.

23

Links with videos showing recommended hand washing techniques

<https://youtu.be/IsgLivAD2FE>

and also a nice up light experiment video for children showing germs remaining on hands not washed correctly and then hands without any UV light on hands washed correctly.

<https://youtu.be/3SfHdSHK-g0>

Click on links to open in a new tab and then press play up in the new tab.

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

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

Water, soap and paper hand-towels are available in all of the classrooms and bathrooms. Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

Unicef simple document re Covid that includes very simple information for

students/staff/parents and also little activities for children re hand washing with glitter

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>

free posters showing hand washing and hand sanitizing

[https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Hand\\_Hygiene\\_Why\\_How\\_and\\_When\\_Brochure.pdf](https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Hand_Hygiene_Why_How_and_When_Brochure.pdf)

### **Frequency of hand hygiene**

Pupils and staff will 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**

Physical distancing can be usefully applied in primary settings allowing for some



flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning. Care will be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times. 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.

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

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- a. Increasing separation
- b. Decreasing interaction

### ***Increasing separation***

The guidance documents provided by the Department of Education on optimal school layout will be used by the school to increase separation to the greatest degree possible. Perspex screens have provided for use by teachers within classrooms. Some perspex screens have been supplied to facilitate the safe separation of students where a distance of 1m cannot be maintained.

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, Le Chéile NS will:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing
2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing

**The teacher's desk and SNA stations will be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks. Where this is not possible a sneeze screen will be erected.**

***Decreasing interaction***

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in a primary school will depend on the school setting and a common-sense approach is required recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between pupils.

In primary a distance of 1m will be maintained between desks or between individual pupils. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore achieving this recommendation in the first four years of primary or special schools, is not a pre-requisite to reopening a primary or special school for all pupils.

Where possible work stations will be allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces which are shared.

Staff members who move from class to class will be limited as much as possible.

***Additional measures to decrease interaction include:***

Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas. Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged. Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resources) it will be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource. Staff and pupils will avoid sharing of personal items.

Encourage pupils 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 regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

### **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school**

#### ***School drop off/collection***

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting pupils will be arranged to encourage physical distancing of 2m where possible.

Walking/cycling to school will be encouraged as much as possible.

Arrangements will be made to maintain a distance of 2m between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff. Aim of any arrangements is to avoid congregation of people at the school gates where physical distancing may not be respected.

#### ***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.

Physical distancing will be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks etc.

A no hand shaking policy has been implemented.

Minimise gathering of school staff at the beginning or end of the school day.

Staff can rotate between areas/classes, but this will be minimized where possible.

#### ***Corridors***

Briefly 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.

### **Use of PPE in Schools**

Masks/face coverings are recommended for adults where 2M social distancing cannot be achieved. Other PPE will not be required to be worn within schools according to current occupational and public health guidance. However PPE is available to all staff members who may choose to avail of this, in particular when working in very close proximity with pupils – masks, visors, disposable aprons, gloves, as applicable or necessary.

### **Masks**

Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

- c. Has trouble breathing;
- d. Is unconscious or incapacitated;
- e. Is unable to remove it without help;
- f. Has special needs, who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering.

For staff, face coverings will not be required if physical distancing is possible and practiced appropriately. It is a requirement where 2M distancing is not achievable.

The use of a visor as an alternative may be considered where there is a concern regarding prolonged close contact and exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets.

### **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings. Routine use 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.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities**

#### *Choir/Music Performance*

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances with instruments may pose a higher level of risk . Special consideration will be given ensuring that the room (Halla) is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained. Instruments will be sanitized before and after usage.

#### *Sport Activities*

Schools will refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. [Link to return to sport protocols](#) is found here. PE is possible within classes. Individual classes may be facilitated with games on the field.

#### *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.

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 modeling materials and play dough where used will be for individual use only.

Art – Where possible pupils will be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards will be cleaned between use.

Musical Equipment/Instruments – To the greatest extent possible, instruments will 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. 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.

### **Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

The school will be cleaned at **least once per day**. Additional cleaning if available will

be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, 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 and pupil's desks.

Staff will thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

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

Chairs are to be put up on the tables and bags on top of the chairs. Classrooms bins will be emptied daily by the caretaker.

The cleaner will sanitize all toilet facilities and classroom/staffroom/office floors each evening. A deeper clean will be required in the event of a suspected Covid 19 case.

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

The room will be cleaned as soon as practicably possible by Eoghan/Anthony.

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.

## **6 Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

Staff or pupils will not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how a school will deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building (in the wheelchair accessible bathroom on the hall corridor). The designated isolation area will be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils. If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the most direct route, keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times. The pupil / adult will be cared for and reassured if they have any concerns. If the isolation/sick bay area is already occupied the child will be brought to an area at the back of the class which is at least 2metres away from their class members and they will wear a face mask. The virus is not air bourne but travels by droplets so this 2 metre distance will be sufficient. Once the isolation/sick bay area is free and fully cleaned then the child can go to this child friendly space where they can colour or draw (if they feel up to it) while waiting for their family. Once the parent/guardian arrives to the building, the child will be escorted to the side door of the



halla where they will be met by their parent/guardian.

Regardless of whether it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil will wear a face covering or mask. Gloves will not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;

Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she will 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 parent/guardian who will 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. Children will be well cared for and will always have the company of a carer while waiting to be collected, even though the carer will keep social distancing.

The individual will avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice will 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 by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind will 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;

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 will be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

While all of this sounds exceptionally clinical, we will ensure that care and reassurance is given at all times to child and staff in our school.

## **7 Special Educational Needs**

### **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 will therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians will have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children will not attend school. Similarly staff will 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 will be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.

See the Handwashing routine and video on the H.S.E guidelines. 1 minute 13 one .

Links with videos showing recommended hand washing techniques

<https://youtu.be/IsgLivAD2FE>

and also a nice up light experiment video for children showing germs remaining on hands not washed correctly and then hands without any uv light on hands washed correctly.

<https://youtu.be/3SfHdSHK-g0>

Click on links to open in a new tab and then press play up in the new tab

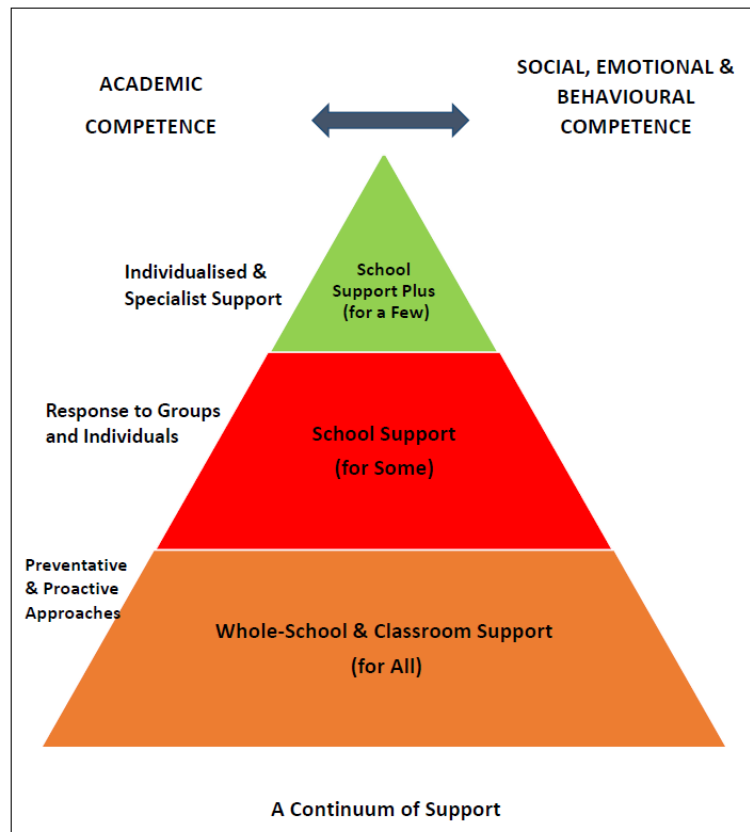
Also see poster

[https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Hand\\_Hygiene\\_Why\\_How\\_and\\_When\\_Brochure.pdf](https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Hand_Hygiene_Why_How_and_When_Brochure.pdf)

### **SET (Special Education Teaching):**

The following plans are in place to minimise staff interaction between classrooms.

- Elaine Butler will be shared between both Junior Infant classes.
- Niamh O’Sullivan will be shared between Senior Infants and Niamh O’Dwyer’s First Class.
- Gillian Ryan will be shared between Second and Sixth Class.
- All other SET staff will be assigned to a particular room.
- SET teachers will be vigilant about sanitising between classrooms and pods when engaging with in-class support and also in sanitising their rooms.
- SSPs (Student Support Files – formerly IEPs), PPPs (Pupil personal plans for those with SNA Access) and other individual or group SET plans will take time to devise following assessment. These will not be ready before Mid-Term break, and parent input will be sought in this process in due course.
- We ask for the time and space to facilitate planning and organisation which will be vital to inform planning and pupil progress. We will be in touch with parents as and when we need to collaborate with you in this regard. If you have any relevant recent reports or information for us please email or post it to the principal or relevant teacher in advance of our return to school to assist our planning for your children.



## 8 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 forms 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 will adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- ✓ Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

## **9 COVID-19 related Absence Management**

The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education as per Circular 0049/2020.

## **10 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'*.

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.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Le Chéile National School COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Le Chéile National School 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 hand- washing 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 from staff is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative (Niamh O’Sullivan) who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners. And by myself. Anthony Fitzgerald – Principal

This Covid 19 Response plan has been drawn up by  
Anthony Fitzgerald  
Eoghan O’ Byrne  
Katherine Madden and  
Niamh O’ Sullivan

Le Chéile National School

This is the property of Le Chéile National School.

Me. Anthony Fitzgerald - Principal

Date: 25/08/2020