



**Covid-19 School Response Plan**  
**August 2020**

**St. Ultan's S.S**  
**Roll No: 19216E**

## Introduction

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in **St. Ultan's S.S.** 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 (NPHET). 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 NPHET 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.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)
4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
5. Procedures and Protocols in place Supporting Children's Return to School
6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
7. Health & Safety
8. Teaching & Learning
9. School Transport Scheme Services
10. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
11. Control Measures
12. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
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.

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

## 1. St. Ultan's S.S. COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

COVID 19 Policy Statement St. Ultan's N.S. 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 can be done through the Lead Worker Representatives.

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

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

## 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 work will 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.

### **School Buildings**

Before re-opening our school has checked the following:

- Flushing of the water system at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
- School equipment and mechanical ventilation has been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
- Bin collections and other essential services have resumed.

### **Signage**

Signage has been displayed outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and in support of good hand and respiratory hygiene. (Useful 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/>

## **3. 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 lies primarily with the Board of Management and the School Leadership. The Return to Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

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

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians,

contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

<b>Name of the Lead Worker Representative</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siobhan Gillen</li> </ul>	s.gillen@stultansnavan.com
<b>Assistant Lead Worker</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Sandra Irwin	046-9021831
<b>Health &amp; Safety Officer</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Eddie Martin	e.martin@stultansnavan.com

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.

#### **4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. The completed risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in our school setting is attached at **Appendix 2.**

It is important that schools review their emergency procedures involving fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented. The school's health & safety officer will liaise with management and the LWRs & Assistant LWR to ensure all safety protocols are observed.

The school has furthermore reviewed the existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. All changes to the school's current risk assessments have been documented by the school principal.

#### **5. Procedures and Protocols in place Supporting Children's Return to School**

##### **Underlying Principles**

- The school has the responsibility to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of the school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Dept. of Education & Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for the full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve this aim.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of the whole school community, it is possible to minimize the risk of COVID-19 being introduced to the school and the consequent risk of its spread.

- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

### **Assumptions**

- All children return to school and classes operate within the bubble system.
- The school will utilize several entry/ exit points to minimize the number of children using any one point.
- Children will remain in their class bubble for the duration of the day.
- For all break times children will be paired with the class next to them, class 2 will play on their own, class 3 and 4 will play together, as will class 5 and 6. Senior 1 and 2, senior 3 and 4, and senior 5 and 6 will be paired together
- Children will eat their lunch at the regular small break and lunch times, the yard will be separated into 3 areas to accommodate classes.
- Children will leave/ exit the school through the same entry points using a staggered system of the class bubbles, juniors will leave first, followed by the seniors after in 2-3-minute intervals
- Hand sanitizer will be available at stations at entry points and in each classroom.

### **Arrival at School**

The gates will be open from 8:30am each morning with supervision by the principal and 3 post holders from 8.45am. Juniors will be taken from the buses first by an SNA and brought to the hall. Seniors will then follow. Each SNA has been assigned 3 buses to limit contact as much as possible. Parents are asked to contact the school office and make arrangements if they are dropping or collecting children. Parents will be asked to wait outside the main office in the morning and evening and their children will be brought to them or collected from them by the class teacher or SNA. No parent is allowed enter the school building without an appointment.

SNAs, Principal & Deputy Principal will take up designated supervision points to supervise the children's safe entry to school. Rostered supervision will be in place both on the yard and within the school building.

- If a child is unwell, the child's temperature will be taken and if found to be elevated, parents will be contacted and asked to take the child home in the interest of health & safety.

### ***How Classes Enter the School Grounds & School Building***

Juniors will be accompanied off the busses and brought to the main hall. The hall has been divided into four sections, clearly marked. Class 2,3,4, and 5 will be in the hall. The children will remain here with the SNA from their room until they are collected by the class teacher at 9am.

The senior children will be brought to the middle building, senior 1 N and S will be supervised in Senior 1 S room, senior 2 and 3 will be supervised in class 4, senior 4 and 5 will be supervised in senior 4 room, and senior 6 and class 6 will be supervised in class 6. Supervision is for a maximum of 10 minutes each morning. Teachers collect their classes at 9am and bring the children to their assigned rooms.

A timetable is in place for the above supervision with the same SNA supervising the same children every day.

### **End of School Day**

- Parents/adults who are collecting children may collect them from the Main Office. Parents are not permitted to enter the school building; they must wait adhering to social distancing outside the main office; their child will be brought to them by the resource teacher or the class SNA. Prior arrangements will be made with the school secretary for such collections.
- All other children will exit the building, junior classes first followed by seniors, staggering the times between 2-3 minutes.

### **Collection of Children during the School Day**

- Parents who need to collect their child early from school should come to the window in the front office as normal. Please adhere to HSE advice regarding the wearing of masks.
- The child will be brought from their class to the main entrance lobby area to meet their parent/ guardian there. Parents should sign their child out as normal.

### **Parent meeting the Principal or a Teacher**

If a parent wishes to meet with the Principal or a teacher, they must make an appointment as normal through the office. Access will only be permitted once they have signed in for contact tracing and used the hand sanitiser. Once inside the school building, they must maintain the required social distance and follow the directions of the Principal/ member of staff.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- Families who have been abroad must ensure that the 14- day quarantine has been completed before coming back to school.
- Children who have Covid-19 symptoms should NOT come to school.
- Parents are asked to ensure that each child has their own bottle of hand sanitiser, packet of tissues and packet of wipes. Each should be labelled and replaced when empty.
- All equipment such as pencils and colours, copies etc. must be labelled coming to school as these items cannot be shared.
- Parents should talk to their child about correct cough /sneeze etiquette, hand sanitising and social distancing where applicable.
- Parents should ensure that all books/ writing materials, lunch boxes and water bottles are sanitised by using alcohol wipes each day on completion of homework and before placing the items back into school bags.
- Water bottles should be filled at home every evening or morning.
- Children should go to the bathroom before they leave home for school each day.
- Children should wash their hands before leaving for school each day.



- Promoting the children’s wellbeing will be a significant component in supporting children’s learning and transition back to school. **Therefore, it is vitally important that no sense of blame or an accusation be made to any child, by any child, or other person using statements such as ‘You have Covid-19’. This will not be tolerated,** and we ask for parent’s support in speaking to your children about the importance of ‘Kind Words’.

### Lunches

Parents are asked to ensure that children bring their lunch with them each day to school to avoid unnecessary visits by adults to the school. Please remind children not to share food or drinks with other children. Children will eat their lunch at their desk as normal.

### Uniforms

- Children’s uniforms & tracksuits should be washed regularly to minimise the possibility of infection from the coughing and or sneezing etiquette into the elbow/ sleeve. Use tissues where possible and dispose in the bins provided.
- PE days are to be assigned to class groups so that the PE uniforms can be worn to support regular washing of uniforms.
- Children’s clothing must be clearly labelled as we will not be able to collect clothes in a ‘Lost & Found’ area/ box.
- Children should **only wear their school uniform/ PE uniform to school and school related activities**. They should change into other clothes on coming home.

## 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,
- Loss 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:

- We will promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- 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 parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID-19 not to attend schools and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.

Staff, pupils and visitors should always 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. St. Ultan’s S.S. will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

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>

### **Children who should NOT attend school**

If your child falls into one or more of the following categories, they should not attend school;

- Children who have been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Children who have a suspected case of COVID-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person with a suspected case of COVID-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying medical conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
- Children who have returned home from travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell

### **Children in High Risk Groups**

Parents should seek advice from their GP/ specialist if they think their child is in a high-risk group. They must make an informed decision if it is safe to send their child to school.

The Minister of Health recently announced that the flu vaccine will be available free to all children aged between 2 years and 12 years in the coming weeks. The vaccine will be given as drops on the tongue. Further information is to follow from the Dept. of Health.

Children who are deemed to be high risk and cannot attend school will be supported by class teacher and SET teacher where applicable in a blended learning approach.

### **Supporting pupils at “very high risk” of COVID-19**

The Department is conscious that there may be some pupils for whom return to school at the end of August may not be appropriate because the relevant public health guidelines indicate they are at “very high risk”.

Additional supports will be provided for these pupils/students through designated teachers from within the staffing resources of the school.

Schools will have discretion to manage and redistribute their teaching support resources in order to best meet the learning needs of their pupils/students, including pupils/students at ‘very high risk’ to COVID-19.

Under the direction of the School Principal the designated teacher will:

- Liaise with the class teacher and special education teacher on relevant curricular content and classwork
- Access relevant learning resources;
- Provide the pupil/student with individualised support for his/her learning;
- Increase the pupil/student autonomy, motivation, agency and wellbeing;
- Improve the pupil/student capacity to become a self-directed learner;
- Support the development of the pupil/student digital competency;
- Avail of the communication/learning platform used by the school to ensure ongoing contact with classmates and class teacher.

### **Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in a Class**

If the school is notified that a person in your child’s class has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the following will apply;

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified
- Public health advice will be sought and followed

### **Use of Face Masks for Pupils**

Children with special needs are not required to wear face masks and public health advice is that the use of face masks by younger children can cause more harm than good. Please consult HSE advice for more information.

If a parent wishes their child to wear a mask or a visor, then this will be permitted as this is a parent choice. The parent must provide the mask or face covering for their child.

### **Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19**

All staff and pupils are requested to adhere to very high standards of hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and social distancing where applicable. Strict guidelines and protocols have been put in place to minimise the spread of the virus. All persons operating within the school environment are expected to maintain a high degree of compliance and vigilance regarding the implementation of the safety guidelines and protocols. The following HSE advice should be followed rigorously.

#### **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>

#### **Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers**

Hand hygiene can also be achieved using 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.

They will be available at entry to the school building and at entry points in each classroom.

#### **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.

#### **Physical distancing**

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

Pupils are required to ensure that they physically distance themselves from other children and adults by **1 metre**.

Staff and other adults are required to **observe 2 metre** distancing where possible.

#### **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 Covid19.

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.

### **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.

### **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

### **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:

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

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, 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 staff do fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

### **Personal Items**

- The sharing of items by either children or staff is not allowed
- Children in all classes should not share equipment, materials, books etc.
- Teachers and staff should not share equipment and or materials

### **Yard**

Class bubbles will have access to the yard at allocated times with a maximum of 6 classes on yard at any one time.

Teachers along with an SNA on yard supervision or duty will be assigned to specific class bubbles. Teachers must remain with these bubbles for the duration of yard time and ensure the following:

- Different Class bubbles must not mix with each other
- Children should be encouraged to keep the 1 metre social distancing rule on yard
- Contact games cannot be played
- Yard materials cannot be out due to the inability to adequately sanitise after each break
- A rota for yard duty for teachers and SNAs will be given to each teacher/ SNA

### **Children's Learning Spaces & Desks**

Every effort will be made to ensure that children will remain in their bubbles using their own learning spaces. Children must make every effort to ensure following the school and teacher's guidelines on maintaining social distancing and working within their bubbles as directed. Children will not be allowed to leave their classrooms. Every effort will be made to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities. Toilets in classrooms – Cleaning: wipes will be provided for cleaning of door handles and general surfaces.

### **Shared Equipment**

Due to necessity, some equipment will need to be shared, this will include tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured play activities and Maths in infant classrooms. Cleaning of this equipment will take place at regular intervals to minimise the spread of infection and it is the policy

that where possible equipment will be assigned to the same bubble of children. Children will hand sanitise before and after using this equipment.

### **Special Education Support (SET)**

SET support will continue to be provided through a blended approach of in-class and withdrawal support.

- In-class support: Teachers working in classrooms should keep the social distancing rule of 1 metre where possible, positioning him/herself at the group table as in diagram displayed in classrooms as per '*Covid 19 Response plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools*'.
- Withdrawal: When children go to the SET room for support the minimum of 1 metre distancing between children will be maintained.
- Tables and chairs in the SET rooms must be wiped clean in between different groups of children
- SET teachers should maintain a 2-metre distance from other teachers where possible

## **7. Health & Safety**

### **Ventilation, Doors & Windows**

Where possible, doors will be left open to minimise handling of doors and of common surfaces and as a consequence minimise infection being spread.

To ensure adequate ventilation, windows will be kept open as much as possible and all windows should be opened fully to ventilate the room while children are on yard break.

### **Hygiene & Cleaning**

Sanitisers have been installed at all entrances and inside each classroom and SET room.

Hand washing facilities are available in each classroom, classroom toilets and staff toilets.

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

As per DES & HSE guidelines, particular attention will be given to frequently touched surfaces with extra cleaning provided as necessary. These surfaces of door handles, handrails, chairs/ arm rests, desks, lunch eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain the cleanliness of their own work area. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

A cleaning checklist will be operated as per Appendix 9, p. 48, '*COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening of Primary and Special Schools*'.

## **Office**

Children should not be sent to the office on a message. Please use Aladdin for staff messages.

Teachers and staff should only enter the office when absolutely necessary.

## **Photocopying**

Any teacher or staff member using the photocopiers should clean them down with the wipes provided before and after use. Staff and teachers are requested to use the same photocopier where possible.

## **8. Teaching and Learning**

As most primary pupils will not have been in their school building for a period of over five months, the focus at the start of the school year will be on managing the transition period of returning to school from home. While the return to school offers a welcome opportunity for children to revive social connections it is also recognised that it will be an anxious time for some. Schools will be encouraged to allow time for pupils to develop the relationships necessary so that they are available and ready to participate in a meaningful way with their learning.

St. Ultan's S.S. acknowledge the need to allow for revisiting and revising of areas of the curriculum to reinforce and consolidate learning. It is further acknowledged that there will be a requirement to reprioritise certain areas of the curriculum, especially during the initial weeks of the first term, to give greater time and attention to areas such as Social, Personal and Health Education, Physical Education, Language and Mathematics. 'It is intended that as schools form comprehensive pictures of where pupils are in their learning, they will work towards a more typical curriculum plans', p.40 *Returning to School: Curriculum guidance for primary school leaders and teachers*'.

[file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/83428\\_fc647a03-cec8-4b5f-95cd-4af4d6e608ad%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/83428_fc647a03-cec8-4b5f-95cd-4af4d6e608ad%20(1).pdf)

Teaching and learning will focus on where the children are at given that children have not been at school since March 12<sup>th</sup>. We acknowledge and express our gratitude to parents for working with the school so supportively in delivering the blended learning programme and we recognise the challenges that delivering such a programme will have had for families.

Each child will be in a different place regarding his or her learning and teachers will take this into account when planning for teaching and learning for the coming academic year, 2020/2021.

### **Language and Maths**

Teachers will focus on supporting and developing children's learning in language, communication, and Maths as a priority. It is acknowledged that children within the same class group may have different levels of competency. In order to plan for learning teachers will conduct detailed assessments to ascertain the needs of the class and of individual children.

### **PE**

PE will take place in the school gym and or outside on the yard (at different times to lunch breaks). PE classes will be time tabled and class groups will be assigned a PE day. Class bubbles should not mix with another class bubble for PE. All activities will be non-contact and will follow the guidelines



for 'Return to Sport Activity Ireland'.

<https://www.sportireland.ie/covid19/return-to-sport-and-physical-activity>

Any common touch surfaces will be wiped down regularly.

### **Supporting Wellbeing**

The Department has developed and prepared a comprehensive response to supporting the wellbeing of school communities at this time guided by five essential principles for wellbeing promotion at times like this.

These are promoting:

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

These principles are widely accepted and explicitly recommended as protective factors to support optimal returning to normality and wellbeing in the aftermath of emergency situations.

Support provided by the Department of Education will utilise the usual school support structure – the Continuum of Support. This support structure allows schools to provide universal support for all students, using prevention and early intervention approaches, to support wellbeing and transition back to school. The Continuum of Support framework also recognises that some students who continue to struggle to settle, despite the provision of universal support, will require more targeted support, while still others with more complex needs will require an individualised approach to support.

Where some children and families require more specialised support, advice will be sought from NEPs and the HSE.

### **Parent/ Teacher Meetings**

Parent/ teacher meetings are scheduled for the end of October. These meetings may take place via Zoom or face to face. We await guidelines from CPSMA and the DES.

## **9. School Transport Scheme Services**

School Transport Scheme services operated by Bus Éireann on behalf of the Department will fully operate as normal, in line with public health advice, when schools re-open for the 2020/2021 school year.

In planning for normal resumption of school transport services consideration has been taken of the following:

- School transport services are controlled environments.
- Each transport service carries the same children daily to their school of attendance.
- It is a restricted group of transport users which will facilitate contact tracing if required.

Observing hygiene requirements will be a key priority and clear communication to all parents of children or to older students using school transport services will set out the following requirements for those travelling on school transport:

- Not to use school transport if they are displaying symptoms.
- To maintain physical distancing while waiting for transport.
- To always sit in pre-assigned seating and next to a sibling or child from their class group (this should always be the same child).
- To use hand sanitizer on boarding the bus.
- To observe respiratory etiquette always while waiting for and on-board transport services.
- To disembark the bus one by one in an orderly fashion; and
- Children with special needs are not expected to wear face masks.

Bus Éireann, in consultation with the Department, is providing information and guidance for their own employees and to contractors contracted to operate on the School Transport Scheme to advise them of:

- Sanitisation and additional cleaning requirements.
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment for school transport staff.
- Measures to take if a child on a service becomes ill or is displaying symptoms while travelling.
- Return to work safely protocols.

## **10. 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. See hard copy at **Appendix 1**. A RTW form should only be completed **at least 3 days** prior (by **August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020**) to any proposed date of return to the workplace. On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide: details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the

school facility. **Information and the Induction Training are scheduled for Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup> pending confirmation from the DES.**

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

### **Staffroom**

To ensure staff safety and minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection, the staffroom will be available for the following ONLY:

- The morning time before supervision (8am- 8.50am) and during staff's small break/ lunch time
- There will be a maximum of 6 people permitted in the staffroom at any one time, maintaining a 2-metre social distance.

### **Staff Wearing of Visors/ Masks**

It is now a requirement that Teachers & SNA Staff wear a mask or face covering at school. Teachers may choose to wear a visor or mask in the classroom, but a mask only must be worn on the corridors or in any other area of the school that is outside the 'class bubble'.

## **11. Control Measures**

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school.

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 and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

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

### **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 will be available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom 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 will be available at multiple locations within the school facility and will be available in each classroom.

### **iv. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

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

Such include roles where:

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

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid.

This will be updated as appropriate in line with advice from the HPSC. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

The use of a visor or mask is advised where there is a concern that physical distancing cannot be maintained, where 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**

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, door handles and kitchens.

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.

Staff should 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 **bring to school, use and clean their own equipment and utensils** (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

#### **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 St. Ultan's S.S.

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.

## 12. 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 St. Ultan's S.S will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building (IN THE MAIN HALL). The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases is in place. The second designated isolation area is in the Sensory Room.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in St. Ultan's S.S., 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 the Resource Teacher and class SNA will accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route (shortest way possible and may include a partly outdoor route if the person is well enough) 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/bin 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 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 (Incident recording sheet required)
- 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.

### **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 Covid-19.
- 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 same.

### **14. COVID-19 related absence management**

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

#### **Teacher and SNA Absence & Substitution**

Teacher and SNA absence is covered by the DES for substitution.

#### **Substitute Teachers & SNAs**

Substitute teachers & SNAs will be asked to complete the RTW form before commencing work in the school and will be given a copy of this COVID-19 Response School Plan.

### **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.

### ***Reference Documents***

1. COVID Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools
2. Reopening Our Schools, The Roadmap for the Full Return to School
3. Returning to School: Curriculum guidance for primary school leaders and teachers
4. Illustrative SEN Classroom layouts as referenced in the Roadmap for the Full Return to School
5. Checklist for maintaining physical distancing
6. Guidance for Primary Schools & special Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/>

## **Appendix 1**

### **Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire**

#### **COVID-19 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19**

This questionnaire must be completed by staff at least 3 days in advance of returning to work. If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_



Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Questions	Yes	No
1	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?		
2	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3	Have you been advised by the HSE that you are a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
4	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6	Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high-risk group? If yes, please liaise with your doctor and Principal re return to work.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test. Please note: The organisation is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and will be held securely in line with our retention policy. Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

### COVID-19 Risk Assessment (Appended Separately)

(List identifies COVID-19 as the hazard and outlines control measures required to deal with this risk)

**Appendix 3 (This document will be appended separately)**

### **School Contact Tracing Log for Visitors**

Please see Appendix 5: Contact Tracing Log from the document '*COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special*

*Schools'* as the example of the tracing log the school will use as it is very detailed.