



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of St. Joseph's National School Boyerstown August/September 2021

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This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie or agreements with education partners as appropriate for primary and special schools.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

Appendix 2 School Contact Tracing Log

1) Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read the Covid 19 Response Plan for our school. This is a living document, meaning it will evolve as we review all our plans and procedures for ensuring the safety of all our pupils and staff and as we receive further updates from the Department of Health, the HSE and the Department of Education.

The Minister for Education has published “*The Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience in Schools*” in August 2021. It sets out what the operation of schools will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context.

It 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). Each workplace is required to have a COVID-19 Response Plan. In addition to being places of learning, schools are also places of work. This document sets out the information that primary schools need to implement a School COVID-19 Response Plan, including a COVID-19 policy, lead worker representative and process to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19.

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 Boyerstown School. It 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.

This document focuses on the practical steps which are being taken in Boyerstown School to minimise the risk of the introduction of infection into our school while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time. The documentation in this booklet is supported by the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities.

One of the key challenges is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning. This document identifies the steps Boyerstown School can take to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and the steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the school itself.

The Department has worked intensively with the education partners to develop consistent plans, advice, protocols and guidance for schools, including the School COVID-19 Response plan. There is a suite of documentation available to support schools to reopen safely and fully including guidance on learning, school programmes and wellbeing for the 2021/22 school year. There is also information on funding, staffing and resources to schools to support COVID-19 measures.

In addition the Department has a communication plan for school reopening which focuses on ensuring that schools, school communities and all stakeholders will have the relevant information to support the reopening and continued operation of schools. There is a particular focus on supporting parents and students through the appropriate use of media channels, through schools themselves and on **gov.ie**

2) What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?

A Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for Boyerstown School to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*', the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to pupils, staff and others. The response plan supports 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 pupils in the school. The COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice as appropriate for primary and special schools.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and sustainable return to work, and reopening of schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents.

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents, 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 same.

3) School COVID-19 Policy

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of Boyerstown School to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the chairperson and principal of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of

the staff, pupils, parents and others. Schools must have a COVID-19 policy in place prior to the reopening of schools for the 2021/22 school year.

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Boyerstown NS is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed and updated 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 handwashing 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 is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

4) Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management of Boyerstown School 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 Boyerstown School and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

Before reopening our school for the 2021/22 school year, the school will have these processes in place:

- 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 (including the introduction of CO2 monitors in September 2021 in each classroom to assess air quality).
- Teachers where possible will keep classrooms well ventilated by keeping doors and windows open where and when appropriate.
- 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 to check the following:

- Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
- Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
- ___Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

4.1) Induction Training

All staff in Boyerstown School 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 will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

A national information campaign to support parents and pupils will happen in advance of schools reopening on issues such as COVID-19 awareness and to help minimise the risk of introduction and spread of the virus in schools.

4.2) 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 online or from the principal.

A RTW form should be completed and returned **3 days** before returning to work.

The principal will also provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff 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.

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at **very high risk**. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

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

- are over 70 years of age - even if 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 immunosuppression drugs
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they 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 are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally are contained in Circular 49/2020 and Circular 54/2020 and have been issued accordingly to every member of staff.

4.3) Lead Worker Representative

The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

This section sets out how the provisions will operate in schools. The process for appointment of the lead worker representative in schools has been agreed centrally between the Department of Education and the education partners.

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 school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in Boyerstown Schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, pupils or others he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the principal/Board of Management.

Role of the Lead Worker Representative

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Work collaboratively with Boyerstown School management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;

- In conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

The role of the Deputy Lead Worker Representative will be to assist the Lead Worker Representative and to deputise as Lead Worker Representative where the Lead Worker Representative is absent.

<i>Name of lead worker representative:</i>	<i>Contact details:</i>
Eibheann Keegan	(046) 9027252 boyerstownns@gmail.com
<i>Name of Deputy Lead Worker Representative:</i>	
Majella Murray	(046) 9027252

All staff, pupils, parents, 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.

4.4) Signage

Boyerstown School will display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Posters will have age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc.

These posters will be displayed in prominent areas such as our reception areas, office, corridors, classrooms, bathrooms and staffroom.

4.5) 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.

Boyerstown School has six classrooms now referred to as class bubbles.

Junior/ Senior Infants Teacher = Sharon Matthews (26)

Senior Infants/1st Teacher = Niamh Quinn (25)

2nd Teacher = Shawna Sherlock (26)

3rd /4th Teacher = Selina Sweeney/ Laura McMahon (27)

4th /5th Teacher = Shared Teachers Nazanine Corrigan and Margaret O'Brien (28)

6th Teacher = Eibheann Keegan (19)

The class teachers will be arranging the pupils into groups of 2 to 6 pupils in the classroom which are called class pods. Within the classrooms the pupils will remain in their class pods for teaching and learning. When the pupils go out for break at mid-morning and lunchtime the children from different pods will be able to mix and play together outside.

The yard will be zoned into three distinct areas and class bubbles will remain in their zones for the duration of the two breaks. As per public health advice, this is subject to change. The teachers and special needs assistant will supervise at break times to ensure the smooth running of this plan.

In the long corridor in Boyerstown School that leads from the Learning Support Room, past the school hall and office, finishing at the entry points to junior and senior infant/1st classrooms there is a one-way system for pupils and staff in place to maintain physical distancing.

Boyerstown School has reviewed 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.

Boyerstown School is in the process of reviewing their existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments will be documented and incorporated into the school safety statement.

First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Boyerstown School. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, Boyerstown School 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 Boyerstown School building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering Boyerstown school will be maintained.

A detailed information pack has been prepared on all class pods and bubbles which can be sent to the HSE in the event of a positive Covid case in our school. They may use this information to identify close contacts of said case.

All school records and data are maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Acts.

Parents, essential visitors and contractors who would like to make an appointment to meet a teacher or the principal can call Nuala or Trish in the school office at 046 9027252 or send an email to boyerstownns@gmail.com. Parents, essential visitors and contractors are not permitted to enter the school premises under current regulations with Covid-19 without a prior appointment to ensure safety of all our pupils and staff.

Appendix 2 Contact Tracing Log.

5) Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Boyerstown School

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 are being 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.

Staff should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.

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. Those who have been fully vaccinated and are asymptomatic may come to school even when identified as a close contact.
- 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;
- Parents and essential visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point;
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

5.1) 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

Latest advice from the HSE informs all parents and staff that if a pupil has a runny nose and/or sneezing without any other symptoms that are listed above, that child can attend school. The above symptoms are subject to update from the HSE.

5.2) Respiratory Hygiene

In Boyerstown School we will ensure that all pupils and staff 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.

5.3) Hand Hygiene

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

Boyerstown School will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the school on how to wash your hands.

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

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins will be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

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

Hand sanitiser dispensers have been installed at exit and entry points of Boyerstown School classrooms and care will be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risks of falls.

Wash hand basins, running warm water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all toilets and classrooms in Boyerstown School.

Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and paper towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.

Hot air dryers are available in every bathroom for hand drying. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.

Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

Twenty two hand sanitiser dispensers have been installed to service every classroom and reception area. We are asking parents not to send children to school with their own bottle of hand sanitiser. This would be unsafe for your child or for other children in their classroom.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Pupils and staff should 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.

5.4) **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing will be used in Boyerstown School 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. Flexibility in the implementation of measures will 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 are advised to maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Physical Distancing falls into two categories:

- 1) Increasing Separation
- 2) Decreasing Interaction

As explained earlier in this Covid-19 Response Plan for Boyerstown School, the pupils when entering school every morning will remain in their various class bubbles from Junior Infants to 6th class. Within their class bubbles, the pupils will be arranged in groups of two to six pupils, now called class pods. The pupils will remain in these class pods throughout the school day (except at break-times) for teaching and learning. There will be a 1 metre distance between the various pods in each classroom, or class bubble.

There is some flexibility in this arrangement for the teachers who are teaching pupils in the Junior Infants, Senior Infants/1st and 2nd class bubbles, as it is recognised that younger children may find it challenging to maintain physical distancing at all times indoors.

- Generally speaking the objective is limit contact and sharing of common facilities between pupils in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible.
- The aim of the system within the school is that the class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

Staggered Arrival and Dismissal of Pupils

To minimise the risk of pupils congregating in the school yard in the mornings and afternoons, we have devised a plan to stagger the arrival and dismissal of the 151 pupils

In Boyerstown School parents will not enter the school yard and pupils will go directly to their classrooms where their teacher will meet them. There will be no line-up in the yard in the mornings for pupils.

Mornings:

All pupils in the school are to be dropped off at school between 8.45am and 9:05am.

Afternoons:

All pupils in Junior and Senior Infants will be collected at 1:25pm. The pupils from Junior Infants will be collected from the main Front Door of the school. The senior infant pupils will be collected from the Senior/Infants/1st class entry/exit point to the school yard. This will reduce the numbers of parents/guardians gathering in the one area to collect their child and pupils in different class bubbles gathering in an enclosed area.

All pupils in 1st, 2nd classes and their siblings in 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th classes are to be collected from school between 2.25pm and 2:35pm.

All pupils in 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th classes (who don't have siblings in 1st, 2nd) can be collected from school between 2.35pm and 2.45pm.

We ask parents/guardians to adhere strictly to the time slots allocated for drop-off and collection of pupils in order for this plan to work and to ensure the safety of all our pupils and parents/guardians.

Staggered Break-times

The break-times in Boyerstown School will be a 20 minute mid-morning break and a 20 minute lunchtime break. The yard will be zoned into three areas to ensure class bubbles have their own dedicated space to mix and play with their own class.

From 10.20am to 10.40am

Junior/ Senior Infants

Senior Infants/1st

2nd

From 10.45 to 11.05am

3rd /4th

4th/5th

6th

From 12.05 to 12.25pm

Junior/ Senior Infants

Senior Infants/1st

2nd

From 12.30pm to 12.50pm

3rd /4th

4th/5th

6th

Children will be encouraged to practise hand hygiene before and after entering the schoolyard for break-times. The children will be supervised at all times by teachers and the special needs assistant to assure the children enjoy their time with the other pupils in their

class bubble mixing and playing and staying safe. School equipment will be used for safety and hygiene purposes. School equipment will be sanitised after each usage.

Homework and School Bags

In an effort to minimize contact and to ensure the safety of the children, we have decided that the children's books and pencil cases will remain in school. For the initial weeks of this school year, we have decided to assign no written homework to the children.

This means that children from Junior Infants to 2nd class will leave their schoolbags beside their desks, and each child will keep their own books and belongings in their bags while not in use. The school bags will not be brought home.

Children in 3rd to 6th class are asked to bring a storage box of 24 litres to school for their books and belongings. All children's belongings must be clearly labelled.

Each child will be required to clear their desk each day before leaving school, in order to facilitate sanitizing of each individual workspace by the school cleaning staff.

Therefore, each child will attend school every day with only a lunchbag and drink, and return home with these same items. We ask that these be washed and sanitised each evening.

3rd to 6th class will be able to use their schoolbag for storage of their lunch and coat while at school.

Similarly, pencil cases and colours will remain at school, and so a set for use at home will also be needed when homework is assigned.

Staff:

Staff have been advised on the use of Face coverings/visors to protect themselves and the pupils they are working with. Face coverings and or visors will be used by the class teachers, Special Needs Teachers and the Special Needs Assistant on a daily basis due to the proximity to pupils necessary in much of the daily teaching and learning activities within the class bubbles.

As per Department of Education guidelines there is no requirement for any pupil under the age of 13 to wear a face covering in a school setting.

Physical Distancing of 2m between staff member is being recommended to staff.

Staff members rotating between different class bubbles will be minimised as much as possible. Exceptions are made for Special Needs Teachers and the Special Needs Assistant.

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

Staff will bring their own cups, cutlery, and delph to and from school to avoid sharing of above items in the staff room setting.

Staff will wash hands and hand-sanitise regularly throughout the school day.

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom Boyerstown School 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 should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.

Staff

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.

If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and guidance on face covering will be observed.

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

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

Implement no hand shaking policy.

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 with exceptions for Special Education Teachers.

5.5) Use of PPE in Schools

PPE will not be required to be worn within Boyerstown School 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. This might include roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with those who are in the very high risk category.

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

Masks

Masks/Face Coverings/Visors

Face coverings are deemed not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

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

All staff have been advised on the wearing of face coverings and/visors in the school building and the school yard.

Gloves

The use of disposable gloves in Boyerstown 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.

6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

Thankfully we are able to continue our Music Generation classes and GAA coaching sessions safely in Boyerstown NS. To minimise risk of virus transmission, incoming GAA coaches and music teachers will not be working with other primary schools on the day in which they are in Boyerstown.

Cumann na mBunscol, the organisation responsible for organising all Gaelic Games competitions in schools has cancelled all competitions for the remainder of the 2021 calendar year. They will review this in January 2022 depending on advice from the Department of Health and the GAA.

Thankfully the First Holy Communion for the 2nd Class Pupils of 2021/22 is going ahead for all the pupils and their parents on Saturday September 11th @ 11am in Bohermeen Church and we are looking forward to this very special occasion. Confirmation for the 6th class of 2020/21 will also be taking place on Tuesday the 21st September in St Mary's church Navan.

- All jigsaws, puzzles, toys, concrete materials for Mathematics used in classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- We ask parents to not send toys/games into school with their children as they may be shared with other children unwittingly or without the knowledge of the teacher.
- Cloth or soft toys may not be used by the children in the classrooms.
- Clean toys/games and equipment will be stored in a clean container in the classroom by the teacher.
- Uniforms are recommended to be changed every 1 to 2 days to maintain good personal hygiene in all pupils.
- Sport equipment, art materials, musical equipment, laptops/electronic equipment will all be cleaned and disinfected after use by pupils.
- Pupils will need a pencil case for home use and a separate pencil case for school use that will stay in school. Pupils will not share pens, pencils, rulers, rubbers, parers, markers etc. at school with other pupils.

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

Shared Sports Equipment – Boyerstown School will minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

7) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

There will be an enhanced cleaning system in place in Boyerstown School for 2021/22. This will involve the daily Hoover and clean of all corridors, classrooms, bathrooms, other rooms and reception areas, followed by a disinfectant clean of all table tops, chairs, door handles, taps, sinks, hand driers, toilet seats and lids, light switches, hand-sanitiser dispensers, soap dispensers, paper-towel dispensers, essentially every frequently touched surface in the school building.

There will be an additional disinfectant clean of all frequently touched surfaces at lunchtime from 12.20 to 1.05pm, when various class bubbles will be in the school yard with the teachers and special needs assistant.

The cleaning and maintenance staff have received the Department of Education Induction Training for cleaning staff, as well as training in using the various cleaning and disinfectant materials. They will maintain a twice daily checklist of all areas cleaned and disinfected to be furnished to the principal or vice principal on completion.

There will be daily collection of waste disposal from each classroom and other areas at school.

Staff will clean thoroughly and disinfect their own work area before and after use each day. Staff will use and clean their own equipment and utensils used in the staff room (cup, cutlery and plate etc.).

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

The room will be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.

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

Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.

Our cleaners will avoid touching their face and wear gloves and an apron while they are cleaning.

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

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

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

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

8) 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 Boyerstown School will deal with a suspected case that may arise.

The front area of our PE Equipment Room, that has no equipment on display is identified as the designated isolation area as only staff have access to this area. This designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school 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;

We will isolate the person and accompany them to the designated isolation area via the isolation 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.

Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room.

The staff member supervising the pupil or fellow staff member until they are collected are required to wear PPE wear, i.e. face mask, apron/gown and gloves.

We will provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask while waiting to be collected and while exiting the premises;

Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents 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. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;

If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner 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;

We will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;

There will be 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 and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

The isolation area in Boyerstown School will be called the “Chill out area” for pupils and members of staff.

9) 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 should not attend school.

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

Staff working with special needs pupils will be using either face masks or visors due to the proximity to the pupil required by these staff members in providing valuable learning experiences and activities.

All toys/games and equipment used by the special needs pupils will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

10) Staff Duties

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

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette

practices.

- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

11) COVID-19 related Absence Management

If pupils or staff are showing any signs or symptoms which suggest illness/Covid 19 infection, they should call the school to inform them and then not attend school. This is for their own safety and also for the safety and well-being of all 151 pupils and 18 staff in Boyerstown School.

We cannot take any chances with this part of the plan as it will jeopardise the whole school community and possibly result in a full school closure.

There is a supply panel of substitute teachers and special needs assistants to cover any teachers or assistants who have symptoms of Covid-19 and cannot come to work. Pupils who are missing school due to symptoms of Covid-19, or suspected symptoms of Covid-19 will have their absence recorded as this. It is vitally important that every parent, pupil and staff member knows that the Board of Management and School Management of Boyerstown School will understand and support pupils and staff members who must be absent due to suspected Covid-19 symptoms or illness of any kind.

12) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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

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

Appendix 1 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 COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3	Have you been advised by the HSE that you are you 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 Principal re return to work and follow the agreed DES arrangements for very high risk groups		

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 and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school 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 this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: _____

Appendix 2**Contact Tracing Log**

Name of School			School Contact Person	
Address of School			For Queries only: Phone No	
			Email	
Name of Visitor				Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Date of Visit	____ / ____ / ____	Time	Entry to school _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>	Exit from School _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Status	Contract or <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please complete: _____	
Contact details of visitor	Company Name (if applicable)			
	Address			
	Contact No.		Email Address	
	Reason for Visit			
Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)				
Name of Person visited				Length of time spent with each person in the school

