

# **St. Dymphna's School**



## **Covid-19 School Response Plan**

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

This plan was approved and revised by the BOM (Board of Management) on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

## **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 Dymphna's Special school.

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 (NPHE).

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 NPHE 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 school 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. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
- 6. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
- 7. Control Measures**
- 8. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
- 9. Staff Duties**
- 10. Covid related absence management**
- 11. 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 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 Dymphna's Special School COVID-19 Policy**

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. 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. It will be uploaded to our school website and a copy made available to parents on request. It will also be uploaded onto Aladdin our school management system that all our staff have access too.

### **COVID 19 Policy Statement**

St Dymphna's Special School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following 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, Lead and Deputy worker representatives who are 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 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 Representative(s) Donna Shevlin and Aoife Kilgannon (Deputy)

Date:18/8/20

## **2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

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

### **School Buildings**

Before reopening the school in the new school year, the following has been achieved

- Water systems have been flushed at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease
- School equipment and mechanical ventilation has been checked for signs of deterioration or damage
- Bin collection and other essential services have resumed

### **Signage**

The school has displayed signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID – 19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. In line with this St Dymphna's School has put in place appropriate posters throughout the school.

In relation to social distancing St Dymphna's has put in place signage to facilitate traffic management throughout the school.

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

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically or from the Principal.

A RTW form should only be completed at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

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.

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

## **3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representatives**

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. In their absence the Deputy Lead worker would assume the role.

**Note: The process for appointment of Lead Worker representatives in schools was agreed centrally between the Department of Education and Skills and the education partners. That process has been circulated to all schools.**

**All staff at St. Dymphna's have been asked to review the details supplied by Department of Education and Skills on the role of the Lead or Deputy worker and to consider taking on the role. Ideally these roles should be taken by someone not on the SMT so that all staff take ownership of the plan.**

The role of the worker representatives 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.

One member of staff, outside the Senior Management Team agreed to take on the Lead worker role. In the absence of a volunteer for the role of Deputy the role will be carried out by the Assistant Principal. This will be reviewed in October.

Names of Lead Worker representatives	Contact details
Donna Shevlin	Class3@stdymphnas.ie
Aoife Kilgannon	Class4@stdymphnas.ie

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. Risk assessments to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in our school setting are attached

St Dymphna's School will review and continue to update their emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents etc considering 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.

St Dymphna's will review and continue to update 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 also be documented.

## **5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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

This can be achieved through the following measures:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- 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 a contact of a person with COVID19 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 only, and they should be received at the front lobby. Their movement in the school should be strictly limited. No visitors should access the school through the shared area. The keypad code will be changed for entry to the school and will only be provided to current staff.
- **St. Dymphna's school has a Teaching Principal and a part time secretary till 1pm. To avoid disruption to teaching and learning and unauthorised entry to the school parents/visitors should remain in their car and telephone the school if the matter is urgent.**
- The contact tracing log must be completed by all visitors who have consent to enter the school during the day.

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 Dymphna's will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

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

### **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 by the use of a hand sanitisers (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers are deployed around 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 and exit points, in each classroom and in corridors

### **Physical Distancing**

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

Guidance on the physical distancing requirements will be informed by public health advice for schools.

The following arrangements will be put in place in St Dymphna's School

- Classes, with a maximum class size of 11 will be considered as bubbles. There will be 5 distinct bubbles and these bubbles will not mix.
- Each class (Bubble) will have their own class toilet. For older pupils there will be a cubicle assigned for male and female. Only one pupil will be allowed to enter the toilet area at one time.
- Only one member of staff will be allowed to enter staff toilets at one time. There are two staff toilet areas for use solely by school staff.
- There will be staggered times for all morning and lunch breaks as set down in detail in our Risk Assessment documents. Class 1,2 and 3 will be having their morning and lunch breaks in their classrooms. Class 4 will be in a designated area outside the dining room and Transition class will be using the dining room at this time. Meals will be transported to pupils by our chef to be distributed by the class SNA at the agreed times. This will be reviewed once pupils have settled back into school.
- Class layouts will be adjusted to maintain 1 metre distance between students
- Staggered break times will be scheduled to minimise the number of students/staff interacting at any one time with pupils taking their break in their own bubble.
- Due to the inability to split classes only one teacher on any given day will be approved for an absence (e.g. attending training or on EPV day) as long as sub cover can be retained. The Department has sent out to all schools circular 0045/20 in terms of absence cover.
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- To reduce visitor numbers scheduled IEP meetings will be conducted remotely using a variety of technology such as phone calls, Zoom etc.
  - The Staffroom has been cleared so a maximum of four staff will be able to use the room at any one time. Socially distanced tables for three staff are available. There will be a one-way system in place for staff so that staff can access the hot water boiler/kettle. The staff fridge will only be used to store milk purchased by the school and all other electrical equipment such as microwaves have been removed. Staff break times have been adjusted accordingly to facilitate this and this will be reviewed on a regular basis.
  - Staff briefings will no longer be held in the staff room. Staff meetings/briefings will be held in the GP room weekly after school.
  - All other group communication will be through Aladdin.
  - Non administrative staff will be limited to one at any one time in the school office.
  - Access to the photocopier will be discussed with class teachers with an agreed procedure put in place.
  - Appropriate traffic management systems will be put in place with clear signage throughout the school.
  - There will be no stopping or gatherings in the corridors. Students and staff will adhere to the traffic management system.
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- Routes to the Playground have been altered in order to minimise crowding on corridors and at exits with classes using their own external doors to go outside.
  - Students travelling by bus in the mornings will be met outdoors by their class SNA with Class 2 and Transition class entering and exiting through their own class external doors to minimise crowding in the front hall.
  - Student phones and medications will be collected and stored by their class teacher.
  - Students travelling in private cars are to remain in their cars until 9.10am and then meet their SNA outdoors before going to their classroom.
  - If pupils arrive at school late or are returning from an appointment parents should telephone the school and wait in their car. An SNA will then meet the child and take them to their classroom.
  - At the end of the school day pupils should remain in class till they are called for their bus. Only one bus will be called at a time.
  - Students will line up in their appropriate groups using the social distancing signage in place when required.

### **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 the designated tissue bin (foot pedal 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:

- 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 immunosuppression 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. All staff have been advised of the leave arrangements that apply and sent Circular 0045/20.

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

## **6. 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.

These control measures are outlined in this document.

The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

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

The following control measures have been put in place:

#### **i. Return to Work Form**

Staff will be required to complete an RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). 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.

**Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.**

#### **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.

Each classroom will have closed pedal bins solely for used tissues. All students and staff will be asked to have their own tissues for personal use.

Teachers will remind students regularly about good respiratory and hand hygiene.

The sharing of sports/games/art equipment amongst students will be kept to an absolute minimum. Any items shared will be sanitised after each use.

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

**Face masks/shields are recommended for staff and students of secondary age (13 and above) when unable to adhere to the 2m social distancing guidelines.**

**The Minister for Education has stated that no pupils in a Special school will be asked to wear face coverings in school and the school will abide by any further guidance in this area.**

**Staff will wear visors when social distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained.**

For a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used 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. Gloves will be worn by staff who administer medication

The use of a face covering will conceal facial expression and can make communication difficult and as such may not be practical in a school setting. However, the wearing of a visor as an alternative to a facial covering may be considered where there is a concern that physical distancing cannot be maintained, there will be prolonged close contact and/or that exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets is likely.

Each staff member will be provided with a visor or they may use their own if they so wish.

#### **Wearing of Gloves:**

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate (except when administering medication). It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

#### **v. Cleaning**

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made.

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

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before, during and after use each day.

The Staff room has been cleared and staff will bring their own utensils, cups etc to school and take them home with them each day for cleaning. Cupboards and the dishwasher will not be used, and the fridge will be used solely for storing milk purchased by the school for staff use.

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

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

#### **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.

#### **Visitor contact log**

#### **vii. First Aid/emergency procedure**

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in St Dymphna's School. The first aid kit will now contain masks, visors and gloves for use by the first aid responder.

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 the location and type of medical incident.

### **7. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**

**Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.** In the event of a staff member or student developing symptoms while at school, they should inform the school management team as soon as possible.

The following outlines how St Dymphna's School will deal with a suspected case that may arise during work.

St Dymphna's has identified an isolation area behind closed doors and away from staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in St Dymphna's School, the following procedures are to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- Isolate the person and follow the procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area 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. All classes/staff should be advised to keep the corridor clear at this time to limit contact.
- A mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms (In the case of a staff member) and to the staff member accompanying them. This mask should be worn while exiting the premises or going through any common area.
- Advice will be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bin provided
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member as soon as possible and they will be advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms.
- Public transport of any kind will not be used
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, 999 or 112 will be contacted and informed that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- An assessment of the incident will be carried out to form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved will be carried out.

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.

## **8. Staff Duties**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. 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.

## **9. Covid related absence management**

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES (Department of Education & Skills).

## **10. 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.

Information on the Departments wellbeing Together programme is given below and is available on Dept website.

### **Wellbeing Together**

This service is for teachers and special needs assistants, and for clerical officers and caretakers employed in national schools under the 1978/79 scheme, and clerical officers employed in post-primary schools under the 1978 Scheme.

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) provides advice to employees on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict, mediation etc. The EAS also provides advice and support to managers and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

Where appropriate, short-term counselling is available to employees and their family members. A family member includes a spouse, civil partner or dependent, where the family member can be described as a person over the age of 18 and residing at the family home. In addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is also provided to employees.

A bespoke wellbeing portal and app is available offering a host of online services with access to live chats, videos, podcasts and blogs on topics around mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. In

addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is also provided to employees. The platform is available via Web, iOS App or Android App.

As part of the EAS, a Mental Health Promotion Manager is also available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Spectrum. Life will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote wellbeing in schools during the upcoming school year.