

Christ Church National School
Covid 19 Response Plan (amended Feb 2021)

School Profile

119 pupils
6 classrooms
2 Special Education Teacher Posts
Teaching Principal
2 Full Time SNA posts
Part Time Secretary
Part Time Caretaker
1 Cleaner

Toilets are located in all classrooms except for Junior Infants, who have toilets outside the door of their classroom

All classrooms have a sink in the classroom.

The downstairs classroom has access to a sink in the disabled toilet across the corridor.

Additional Challenges

Limited on street parking is available.

Human Resources allocated through additional funding from DES

Aide – 2 days

DES has allocated 1 day a week for Principal to work on administrative duties (Release Days).

Usual School Hours

School opens at 8.25am

Formal teaching begins at 8.45am

School finishes at 2.10pm

Staggered Drop Off and Collection Times

As we have limited space at the front of the school we request that parents and adults do not come onto the school grounds at drop off and pick up times. Please prepare your child for saying goodbye at the school gate in the mornings. Unfortunately, we will not be able to facilitate parents in the building.

It is essential that your child knows who is collecting them or whether they are to go on the school bus or not. Unlike other years, we will not be able to facilitate changes to collections after 1pm, unless in the case of an emergency.

It is imperative that adults do not come within 2m of each other, this may mean that you must hold back from approaching the school gate at drop off and pick up times until it is safe to do so.

Families and bus children will be allocated a gate to enter and exit from, the green gate and the yellow gate. These are marked.

Priority will be given to pupils arriving and departing from school on the school bus. Please inform the school if your child will be getting the school bus so that we can allocate buses and families a gate to enter and exit from.

There are 4 entry points to the school building depending on class:

- the side steps by the school office – 4th class and 5th & 6th class (lions)
- the main door by the school office – Junior Infants (giraffes)
- the main door at the top of the stairs – Senior Infants & First Class (crocodiles)
- the side gate to the left of the school building – 2nd and 3rd class (frogs)

Collection time – 1st – 6th class 2.10pm

- The children and staff will assemble in the playground at 2.00pm, where the bus children will line up and the children going home will gather by their family surname at playground markings.
- The bus children will exit first using both gates.
- Parents must not approach the school gates until all bus children have boarded.
- The remaining children assembled by their family surname will be divided into two groups and exit by the gate they entered.

Breaktimes

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

Breaktimes will be staggered to avoid bubbles mixing.

Playground equipment will be restricted to each bubble

The children will sanitise their hands on the way to and from the playground, unless they are visibly soiled. In this case the children will be asked to wash their hands.

All pupils will eat inside and be discouraged from bringing food and drink bottles to the playground due to timing issues and to reduce bottles/lunchboxes left in the playground.

| 1st break | | 2nd break | |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 10.00 – 10.20 | Jl,Sl,1 st class | 12.00 – 12.20 | Jl, Sl, 1 st class |
| 10.20 – 10.40 | 2 nd & 3 rd class | 12.20 – 12.40 | 2 nd & 3 rd class |
| 10.40 – 11.00 | 4 th class | 12.40 – 1.00 | 4 th class |
| 11.00 – 11.20 | 5 th & 6 th class | 1.00 – 1.20 | 5 th & 6 th class |

Yard Supervision

Each teacher has a buddy for breaktime and one teacher will supervise the playground while the other teacher has a break. They will swap for the following break time.

Social distancing will be implemented from 3rd - 6th class.

Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class bubble from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

Staff members (particularly Special Education Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

Additional teaching support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

Junior Infants to Second Class

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

Third Class to Sixth Class

Children from Second Class to Sixth Class will be seated in pods **1 metre** distance apart in their classrooms.

Assemblies

It is our intention to host whole school assemblies outside twice a week, weather permitting. Each Class Bubble will have a designated place to stand outside for assembly.

Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

Ventilation

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be opened fully whenever classrooms are not in use (e.g. lunch breaks) and will be kept partially open when classrooms are in use.

Windows in office areas, staffroom and other administration areas of the school should also be kept partially open during the day.

Windows should be fully opened when children are singing as a group.

Toilets

All pupils will be encouraged to use the toilets available to their class before going to the playground.

The toilet downstairs closest to the playground will only be used in emergencies

Lunches

Parents/ Guardians must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

Nuts and foods that contain nuts are not allowed in school.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks in the classroom.

Office

Please telephone the school at 086-8060688 for enquiries/ to make an appointment rather than call in person to the office.

Children should not be sent to the Secretary's Office or to the Reception area to deliver or receive messages.

Photocopying.

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

ICT

Teachers are responsible for wiping down the laptops and tablets after use with their class before they are returned for charging at the charging station.

Visiting Teachers/Coaches

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular outdoor activities such as Coaching for games etc. will be explored. However, it is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time.

Substitute Teachers and SNAs

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Schools should request staff (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Staff members and pupils are encouraged to have regular movement breaks throughout the day.

Parent/ Teacher Meetings

Meetings between parents and teachers will take place by phone when possible.

Staffroom

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2 metres cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn.

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

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible. Utensils will be cleaned in the dishwasher at the end of each day.

The window in the staffroom should be kept partially open at all times when the room is in use.

Teaching and Learning

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since the Christmas break. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be at a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the remainder of the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us in prioritising languages, Maths, Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E) and Physical Education.

Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time due to illness, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.

The majority of parents have already provided an email address at which the school can contact them to support Home Learning. This will be especially important if the school, or parts of the school have to close due to HSE advice. Parents/ Guardians if you have not already done so, please email the Office and you will be added to the Contact List for Home Learning.

Please ensure that the Office has an up to date mobile telephone number in case of emergency.

Please answer your telephone if you see a call from the school.

Wellbeing of the School Community

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. 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

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff members are required to wear face covers at all times in school except when eating. Medical grade EN 14683 face masks are available for all staff. Full PPE equipment will be available to staff:

- 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.

When staff members have to move between classrooms to support children with learning needs.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

Masks

The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings. Guidelines state that they are not suitable for children under the age of 13.

Gloves

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.

Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs or administering First Aid.

There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Hand sanitisers will be installed in all entrance hallways and classrooms. Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

Water and soap is available in all the bathrooms, and at each sink in the classrooms, staff bathroom and staff room.

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

Pupils will be asked to use hand sanitiser as they enter the building in the morning, when they leave the building in the afternoon and after break/lunch time.

Pupils will wash their hands with soap and water before eating, if they cough/ sneeze during the day, after going to the toilet and if their hands are visibly dirty.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Waste will be collected daily from offices and other areas within the school.

Staff are responsible for using and cleaning their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

Infection Control Measures - To prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 in schools

Advise staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test.

- Advise staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - ☐ if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - ☐ if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - ☐ If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
 - ☐ Advise staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.

Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

A designated isolation area has been created in the downstairs classroom.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area using the nearest exit. A distance of 2 metres will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.

If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, parents/ guardians are asked to make sure that their

contact details are kept up to date at all times and that they regularly check their phones for missed calls.

Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.

A face covering will be provided to the staff member who is symptomatic.

The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.

Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.

If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

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.

It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

School staff should be encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contract tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

COVID-19 Related Absence Management

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution

If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil. If a substitute teacher/SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class/pupil to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class/pupil to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

Staff Duties

- Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - ☑ if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - ☑ If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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'.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.