

Covid-19 Policy

St. Laurence's National School 2020

St. Laurence's School recognises the important role it has in slowing the spread of Covid 19 to help ensure students and staff have safe and healthy learning and working environments.

We are committed to following all HSE and DES guidelines. Our school serves students, staff and parents from throughout the community.

All these people may have close contact in the school setting, often sharing spaces, equipment, and supplies.

How our school will prepare, plan for and respond to Covid 19

Planning Principles:

- Planning is supported by the leadership and management.
- Planning is ongoing and involves the comprehensive assessment of the school community and building, taking into consideration our school's unique circumstances and resources.
- Threats and hazards will be identified, prioritised and safety needs addressed.
- An emergency plan will be developed through a collaborative process with all stakeholders and guided by HSE and DES guidelines, when issued.

Prevention (Teachers)

Healthy Hygiene Practices:

- The staff can wear face masks and/or shields/face visors.
- Hand sanitizers will be available in all classrooms and the main entry points to the school buildings.
- Staff will sanitise their hands at regular intervals
- Staff will observe, at all times, the proper protocol with regard to coughing and sneezing
- Staff will not come to work if they feel unwell
- There will be an adequate supply of soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer and tissues to support healthy hygiene practices
- Staff who begin to feel unwell in school will immediately isolate themselves and follow HSE guidelines
- Perspex will be placed on the desks of all class teachers.

Social Distancing and Other Practical Measures:

- All unnecessary contact with colleagues and parents will be avoided.
- Parents/adults will not be allowed enter the school buildings unless they have made an appointment.
- Any visitors to the school must wear a face mask.
- When contact is necessary the recommended levels of social distancing will be strictly adhered to.
- Staff will communicate via email or instant messaging when necessary
- Only one member of staff will access toilet facilities at any given time
- Social distancing will be strictly adhered to in the staff room and in all communal areas as recommended by the DES
- It is 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 should 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.

- 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.
- All staff have engaged with the induction /familiarisation briefing provided by the DES

Prevention (Pupils)

Teach and Reinforce Healthy Hygiene Practices

- Parents will be instructed to not send children to school if they are in anyway feeling unwell
- Any child who presents with any cold or flu symptoms or a temperature will not be permitted to attend school.
- Any child who attends school displaying symptoms or who is unwell will be sent home. Each child will wait in an isolated area until their parents/guardians arrive.
- Parents will be instructed not to send their children to school if they have travelled to any country not on the Green List. In this case the child will be required to quarantine for 14 days as per the Government guidelines.
- Teachers will regularly remind pupils of the proper protocol for washing hands, coughing, sneezing and disposing of tissues
- Pupils will have regular, scheduled hand washing/sanitizing breaks
- Pupils 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.
- Pupils will not be allowed to share any school or personal items

- Notices reminding pupils of new rules will be displayed in the classroom and throughout the school
- The intercom will also be used as a tool to remind pupils

Teach and Reinforce Social Distancing and Other Practical Measures

- Pupils will observe the social distancing rule as recommended by the HSE and DES.
- To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, St. Laurence's N.S has made every effort to:
 1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing
 2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing
- Children will be required to stay in their allocated pods (where possible) in their classroom. A space of 1-2 m will be maintained between pods.
- Children will remain in their Class Bubble when outside the classroom.
- Children will not interact physically with children from other Class Bubbles.
- Teachers will regularly remind children of the rule
- Pupils will be instructed on, and regularly reminded of, the protocol for entering and exiting the school building
- Children will enter their classes at their allocated time and will not line up in the yards.
- Start and finish times for each class group will be staggered, so as to ensure social distancing can be adhered to.
- Pupils will be instructed on and regularly reminded of the protocol for social distancing when outside of classroom

Prevention (Parents)

- Parents will be informed of, and regularly updated on, the school's mission in preventing the spread of Covid 19 and of their role in that mission.
- Parents will not be allowed into the school unless they have made an appointment. This is to ensure that the school is enabled to adhere to all safety precautions and social distancing of adults.
- Parents must wear face masks upon entering the school building.
- Parents of children in the senior school will be asked not to enter the school grounds and parents of children in the junior school will be asked to limit their time on the school grounds as much as possible.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Surfaces and objects frequently touched will be routinely cleaned
- All cleaning products will be used according to the directions on the label
- Disinfectant products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus will be used, following all the manufacturers instructions
- Staff will have access to EPA-disposable wipes so that keyboards, desks and remote controls can be wiped down before use
- All toys and equipment will be cleaned on a regular basis.
- There will be adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices

Lead Worker Representative

The school has appointed a LWR Lead Worker Representative in both the junior and senior school buildings to ensure that all the guidelines to ensure the safety of the school community is being adhered to.

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 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.

Contact Tracing and Contact Log.

- 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 in the office of each building.
- The school will maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts.
- The Data Protection Commission has provided guidance on the data protection implications of the return to work protocols of which the school has taken note. This advice can be found here:
- St. Laurence's is aware that all school records and data must be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with each school in their role as data controller.

Steps to be taken when there is a suspected case of COVID-19 in the school.

- A designated isolation area has been identified within each school building. In the junior building this is room 3 and in the senior building this is the computer room.
- The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 has also been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases has been put in place. In the junior building the alternative room is the office next to the principal's office. In the senior building it is the room beside the staff toilets.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately;
- The person will be isolated. A member of staff will accompany the individual 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;
- Staff members will be reminded 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;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil will wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- A mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms.
- He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- The staff member accompanying the individual will 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;
- The person presenting with symptoms will be facilitated by 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 will be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- If the person is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind will not be used;
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, we will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect;
- The school will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- The person's temperature may be taken.

- The school will arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation **area and** work areas involved, as per the DES and HSE 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 will be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality will be essential at all times.

In the event of a confirmed Case of Covid-19

When a confirmed case has entered the school, regardless of community transmission the school / LWR will contact the HSE for advice on how to proceed as per the guidelines at that time.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management of St. Laurence's National School on the 6th August 2020.

This is a working document and is subject to change.