Covid-19 School Response Plan



The following document outlines the control measures Holy Family N.S. has put in place to mitigate the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19. It is important that staff, students, parents and the wider school community adopt these control measures to help mitigate the risk of infection from COVID-19. This document has been created by Ms Ryan, Principal, Ms Gordon (Lead Worker) and all staff in line with current public health advice and will continue to be updated throughout the school year as further health advice is received. The control measures herein form part of a live working document. Updates to this document will be advised to staff and parents, via email to staff and school website to parents and pupils.

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 Holy Family N.S. The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET). It is important that the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address, may also change. The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school. In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents. This document aims to provide details of:

- 1. COVID-19 School Policy
- 2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
- 3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)
- 4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
- 5. 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-19 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.

Note: The plan is a live working 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;

1. Holy Family N.S. 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

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Holy Family N.S. is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following 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 hand-washing 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 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) – Details below.

Our Aim

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to work 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.

2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

School Buildings

Before re-opening, we will ensure the following:

- Water systems in the main school have been flushed by maintenance to prevent Legionella disease.
- All machinery has been serviced.
- Waste has been managed and a waste management system put in place.

Hallways and Circulation Areas

To ease congestion and ensure safe circulation in the hallways the school has implemented staggered breaks.

Breaks will be staggered as follows:

Junior Infants/1st/3rd/5th: Small break: 10.45 a.m.- 10.55 a.m. Big break: 12.15 - 12 .40 p.m. Senior Infants/2nd/4th/6th: Small break: 11.05 a.m.- 11.15 a.m. Big break: 12.45- 1.10 p.m.

There will be no lining up when bell rings - All class teachers collect children from yard and children proceed directly to their classrooms and pods.

Classes who do not have toilet facilities in their classroom, are allocated certain times for toilet breaks throughout the day.

Arrival times

Children cannot enter the school before 9.10 a.m. If children arrive before this time, they wait in a designated part of the yard. From 9.10 a.m onwards. Children walk to their classroom and sit in their "Pod "until 9.20 a.m... Class teachers must be in their classrooms from 9.10 a.m...

Parents and children must maintain social distancing in the parking area. Parents drop and leave immediately. Parents are not allowed onto school yard.

Home time

Home times will be staggered. Children attending homework clubs and afterschool facilities will leave the school building first.

First class plus their siblings will follow, followed by 2nd class and so on.

Parents and children must observe social distancing when leaving the yard and in the parking area.

Classrooms

Classrooms have been adapted to maximise social distancing Non-essential furniture and materials have been removed to maximise space available in order to implement social distancing. Procedures have been put in place to ensure children will not be sharing materials or that materials that will be shared are sanitised before reuse

Perspex screens are now in the following areas:

- 1. All office areas secretary and principal
- 2. All classroom teachers and learning support teachers have a Perspex screen on their table.

In class

Children will sanitise hands when entering and leaving the classroom and whenever else necessary.

Class teachers will wear visors and/or masks at all times. Face masks to be worn where social distancing cannot be observed, e.g. working side by side with a child.

SNAs and SET teachers will wear face masks and visors when working closely with a child.

Each class is a 'Bubble' and has minimal contact with other classes. Within classrooms, children stay in 'Pods' groups - table of 4-6 children, where possible.

Children will not share materials. Pencil cases should be left in school. Children are not allowed to borrow or share materials with other children.

Teachers will avoid sending children to school offices for messages, materials etc. and will use Aladdin to communicate needs to school secretary and principal where possible.

Homework will not be assigned for the month of September.

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. No parents/guardians are allowed on the school yard without prior consent 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 staff at the workplace.

A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. All staff are expected to use this log in/log out book.

Each classroom will also have a log. This will record any visitor to the classroom. The log will be sent to the secretary each Friday. In the case of a confirmed case of Covit 19 the information will be used for Covit tracing.

Signage

The following Signage is in place in Holy Family N.S.:

- Social distancing signage on footpaths in carpark and on yard.
- The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 displayed in all classrooms.
- Posters promoting good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene.
- No Visitor Access signs on doorways and on yard.
- Procedures for eating in staffroom and using bathroom.

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, all staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically or from the Principal. A RTW form should only be completed <u>at least 3 days</u> 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.

3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

Induction Training / Communication

Staff

The school will provide induction training to all staff.

This will include

- 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 have viewed the induction videos provided by the Department of Education and Skills prior to return to work.

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

Lead Worker Representative

A Lead worker representative will be appointed to assist in the implementation of this Response Plan.

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.

Elaine Gordon is the lead worker representative. Ann O'Connor is deputy lead worker representative. Their role is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- Work collaboratively with the principal and staff 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, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Name(s) of Lead Worker representative:	Contact details
Elaine Gordon – Lead Worker Representative	Holy Family N.S., 071 - 9186291
Ann O'Connor – Deputy Lead Worker	Holy Family N.S., 071-9186291

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.

Pupils

All pupils will receive training on the new safety measures to include-

- Hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene.
- Use of masks (if required).
- Lunch and break time procedures.
- Arrival and departure from school grounds procedures.
- Care and respect for classmates and the wider school community.
- What to do if they develop symptoms while at school.

Parents & Guardians

Our Response Plan and comprehensive control measures will be displayed on our school website.

Parents should familiarise themselves with the Response Plan and Control Measures prior to the start of the school year and the procedures in place should a pupil develop symptoms at school/at home.

Updates to any control measures will be communicated to parents.

Any concerns or queries from parents can be emailed / phoned to the school principal.

4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A *risk assessment* has been conducted, identifying the risk areas and activities. Control measures have been put in place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in Holy Family N.S. Notes have been sent to parents and staff about school reopening from May.

See Appendix 2.

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 Holy Family N.S. 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 contact of a person with COVID-19 not to attend schools and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point following approval from the principal.

Staff, pupils and visitors should at all times 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. Holy Family N.S. will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

The Department has been working closely with the HSE and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) to develop health advice which has been tailored to the needs of schools in order to support schools in planning for reopening in autumn.

The advice will continue to be updated in line with public health advice generally and will inform the development of more detailed guidance for schools by the Department of Education. https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/interim-recommendations-for-the-reopening-of-schools-and-educationalfacilities.pdf

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

The school will ensure that all toilets are stocked with soap, paper towel and a foot-operated, self-closing bin to dispose of paper towels. All toilets will be cleaned and checked as per the school toilet maintenance protocols. Staff should inform secretary when resources are low.

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 available in the following areas

- All access points.
- All classrooms.
- All office/workroom areas
- Staff room

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

Physical distancing

- Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace.
- In line with Department recommendations there will be at least 1m distance between students in class.
- 1m distance will be maintained between students in the yard during break times from 3rd -6th class.
- Classrooms have been arranged to maximise social distancing.

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 in one of the assigned bins.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

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 one of the designated bins and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.
- Share objects that touch your mouth for example, Pens, pencils, 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 list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer

- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking 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. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills. If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

Students – in this group – Parents should contact the school office via email before pupil returns to school. A letter from a consultant is required stating a pupil is not fit to return to school.

Control Measures

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Masks and Face Shields

All staff will be provided with a face shield and masks for use in class and in areas with limited social distancing capabilities such as corridors and yard.

Pupils can wear a mask/visor in class if they wish but they must be trained in how to use and dispose of them properly.

Staff are required to wear a mask where 2m social distance cannot be maintained and a face shield in 2m teaching radius (class).

Children in the isolation unit will also be given a mask to wear.

Intimate Care PPE

Staff whose role may include performing intimate care or where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation will be provided with PPE kit to include, face shield, mask, glove, apron, hazardous waste bag.

Wearing of Gloves

Wearing of gloves in class is at the discretion of each teacher. It is essential that staff wear gloves when administering First Aid to a child. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for good hand hygiene.

Cleaning

Holy Family N.S. has a cleaning team in place to clean/sanitise at the end of each school day.

A comprehensive cleaning /sanitising programme has been devised and will be in operation from the start of the school year.

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

Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.

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.

Children from 1st class up will be trained to wipe down and clean their own work surface twice daily.

There will be 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.

Staff must bring their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.). Sharing of these items is not allowed.

Policy updates in line with COVID-19 Measures

Uniform and PE Gear:

School uniform is still to be worn. Children will have the option to wear their school tracksuit on non-PE days to assist parents in the washing of uniforms.

Staff are encouraged to have a change of clothes in school in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 in the school.

Old uniforms will no longer be kept on site.

There are some necessary changes to some school policy documents, namely the Code of Behaviour Policy and Attendance Policy in line with our new COVID-19 control measures. These changes are as outlined below:

Changes to the School Code of Behaviour

Our Code of Behaviour is under review due to Covid-19 practices.

Changes to our Attendance Policy

Pupils will no longer sign in late at the office – If a pupil is late, the class teacher will record it on Aladdin.

Parents are requested to email the administration office to inform the school of a pupils' absence or late arrival to school. We will not be handling homework journals therefore ask that notes are not written into these.

A footnote will be included on both policies re Covid-19.

Photocopying/printing/lpads

Pupils are no longer permitted to retrieve photocopying material from the photocopier. Photocopier must be wiped down after every use.

lpads can still be used. Each class will be allocated a day for using lpads. Ipads cannot be shared and must be wiped down after use.

First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Holy Family N.S.

In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999

Contact the principal or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

PPE to be worn by teachers when administering First Aid.

6. 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 Holy Family N.S. will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

Isolation Room

The Isolation Room is located at the rear of the school. It is clearly marked.

The 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 work in Holy Family N.S. the following are the procedures which will be implemented.

If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately The person will be accompanied to the isolation room, 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

A mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask at all times and while exiting the premises.

The person accompanying the symptomatic person is required to wear a mask and full PPE.

The symptomatic pupil must be collected immediately from the school by a parent/guardian.

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 a disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bin provided.

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.

A letter will be given to the person with steps of what to do next. It will include advise from the HSE plus a return to school letter. Records of children who go home sick will be kept in the office.

Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.

Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process.

The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made.

The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff/pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

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:

- 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.
- 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 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.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- 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.
- 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.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

9. Covid-19 related absence management

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

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 or the Covid-19 Lead Work Representative.

This plan will be updated regularly over the course of the school year as the need arises.

Appendix 1 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

Appendix 2: COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Appendix 3: School Contact Tracing Log for Visitors