

# **COVID-19**

## **Changes to School's Policies and Procedures**

### **Child Protection Policy**

There have been significant changes within our setting due to Covid-19.

Despite the changes, the school's Child Protection Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DT in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

#### **Reporting arrangements remain unchanged**

The school arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Teacher (DT) is: Mrs Farnon

The Deputy Designated Teachers (DDTs) are: Mrs Kearns and Mrs Bonner

The school's approach ensures the DT or a deputy is always on site while the school is open. In the unusual circumstance where this is not possible, the principal or a member of the School Leadership Team will be contacted by the DT or deputy by 9am to advise that they are acting in an on-site safeguarding role. Contact details for the DT or Deputy DT will be made clear.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedures and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether in school or not. Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on their staff as well as an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm the school will be persistent in referring concerns to the local authority.

#### **Staff will be aware of increased risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through; being contained in a small area, poverty, and financial or health anxiety. Staff will consider these issues before setting work to be completed at home. Any concerns should be reported to the DT.

# Behaviour

## Context

At Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit, we aim to maintain a secure, caring and stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to have respect for themselves and each other. Whilst expectations in the current Behaviour Policy remain pertinent. It is necessary, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, to make some adjustments for the safety of all pupils and staff. These adjustments are set out below:

## Staff Conduct and Wellbeing

The school's usual staff code of conduct is still relevant in the new school scenario. Staff are working in a new way, following new guidelines and their mental wellbeing is paramount. Staff have been consulted over the school's risk assessments. The school's opening plan has taken into consideration staff viewpoints and DE and EA guidance. The school has a Wellbeing Team and members of the team are at hand to support individuals with specific concerns.

Staff must adhere to the 2 metre social distancing rules in place and remind children of these where needed, for their and the children's safety. It does state in Government guidance that children might not be able to maintain 2 metre distancing. Staff must take care to make sure that children follow this, where possible, with regards to themselves, with gentle reminders. There may be times when children go to staff upset and need to be comforted in an age appropriate way. Communal areas such as staff toilets and the staffroom must be used by a limited number of staff at once. Two per toilet area and ten per staffroom.

Staff must continue to adhere to the Government guidelines about social distancing outside of school, in order to protect themselves and other members of the school community.

## **Pupil Conduct and Wellbeing**

The school's usual behaviour rules for pupils are still relevant in the new school scenario, however, in the 'Hierarchy of Consequences/Sanctions' section of our behaviour policy, the following misdemeanours will be considered within the 'Very Serious Misbehaviour' section;

- Deliberately entering another class bubble
- Deliberately ignoring social distancing instructions
- Touching others' property
- Deliberately ignoring hygiene instructions
- Spitting, biting and other actions that put others at risk

The school may decide that a child cannot attend, if they are unable to follow the school's current and amended rules.

Pupil wellbeing is paramount during their time in school. Children will be anxious over having missed school and their friends, ongoing news about the virus, bereavements and more. All children will be in class groups and have adults to safeguard them during their time in school. Part of the children's curriculum will be PD&MU to discuss their worries and concerns.

## **Parent Conduct and Wellbeing**

We endeavour to keep parents update on school plans as well as Government advice/guidance through the school website.

Parents of pupils who have returned/are returning to school have been given a drop off and collection times and been advised about social distancing. Parents are aware that they are not allowed into school at this time. Parents are able to communicate with staff via the school office.

## **Online Safe Behaviour in School**

The school's current acceptable use policy and E safety policy is still in place. Children are supervised using laptops/digital devices and only set work using teacher approved sites.

## **Online Safe Behaviour at Home**

Resources about keeping children safe online have been shared with parents on the school website. Staff may set work for pupils on Seesaw or Google Classroom. Staff will not interact with children in any 'live' lessons. If interacting with other children or staff online, children should always be kind and respectful to each other and respectful and obedient to staff, remembering at all times that staff are not 'friends' with, or peers to, pupils. Any inappropriate comments to staff online, via email, or any other platform will be taken very seriously. This is also the case for any online bullying towards other pupils or peer-on-peer abuse that is disclosed to the school during this time.

## **Routines**

### **Handwashing and Hygiene**

Children will be expected to follow all handwashing and hygiene routines while in school. Children will wash hands/use antibacterial gel as entering school, before eating at break and lunch times and at regular intervals during the day.

We ask children to follow the catch it, bin it, kill it, mantra when in school, if they need to cough or sneeze, they should use a tissue or crook of their arm. Children will be reminded not to touch their face, mouth, nose or eyes while at school.

### **Social Distancing**

Children who are old enough, will be expected to socially distance from their peers and adults in school. When children enter their classroom, they will be expected to go straight to their table and nowhere else in the room. Classes will be orderly at all times and children should remain in their seats to avoid unnecessary contact with others.

We understand socially distancing may be more difficult for younger children; they will be encouraged wherever possible to keep a distance from peers and adults, however, we understand this may not always be possible.

### **Toilets**

Children will only use the toilets one at a time. When a child has finished in the toilet, they must wash their hands.

### **Break and Lunch times**

Break and lunch will be eaten in classrooms. Children will eat at their tables. They will have a designated place for outside play.

Children will be encouraged to remain socially distant from both peers and adults during break/lunch times. They will remain in their bubble at all times.

# Attendance

From September 2020 parents/ guardians are asked to follow the guidance set out by the school in respect of illness and absence. Please refer to the Northern Ireland Re- Opening Schools Guidance Version 2 (13<sup>th</sup> August 2020).

## Pupil Attendance

We will follow the guidance on attendance for pupils who have health conditions, who live with people who have health conditions or are pregnant. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of any health conditions and to provide advice from their medical consultants to ensure it is safe to return to school.

Pupils who are clinically vulnerable are those with pre-existing conditions who have been advised to stringently follow the social distancing guidelines and should stay at home where possible. A small minority of pupils will fall into this category. **Parents should contact the school to discuss.**

Pupils who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) including those who are pregnant, can attend their education or childcare setting. Where necessary, advice should be sought from the Hospital Consultant or GP of the vulnerable person.

Pupils who were previously shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable people): these restrictions eased over time and as of 1 August 2020 'shielding' has been paused. Pupils should follow the guidance of their hospital consultant or General Practitioner if in doubt and **should have an individual risk assessment** conducted.

Pupils living with someone who was previously shielding. These restrictions eased over time and as of 1 August 2020 shielding has been paused. Such pupils **should have an individual risk assessment** conducted.

## Pupils who are Clinically Vulnerable

In light of the Minister's statement 6<sup>th</sup> August, clarifying that "having taken account of the scientific and medical evidence, it is now appropriate for all pupils to return to school during the week commencing the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020", we would consider attendance to be mandatory.

There will be a small number of children where medical guidance would be to refrain from school. The school will seek to satisfy itself, through evidence provided by the family, that the pupil is shielding due to underlying medical conditions. This should take the form of evidence provided by the child's hospital consultant or GP. If this is not provided, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

#### Pupils who live with someone who is Clinically Vulnerable

If a child or young person lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable as above) including those who are pregnant, they can attend school. If in doubt, the parent/ guardian should seek and provide to the school advice from the hospital consultant or GP of the vulnerable person.

#### Pupils who were shielding (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable People)

Advice with regard to shielding eased over time and as of 1 August 2020 shielding has been paused. Pupils should follow the advice of their hospital consultant or GP if in doubt about school attendance. Medical evidence should be provided to the school.

The school will consider distance learning and support the needs of any pupils who are unable to return to school either all or some of the time.

The most up-to-date guidance on underlying health conditions that necessitate shielding can be checked on the NI Direct website under the Shielding Section.

#### Pupils who are living with someone who was shielding

Pupils who have household members who were considered clinically extremely vulnerable (at high risk of severe illness and requiring shielding). These restrictions eased over time and from 1 August 2020 shielding has been paused. Such children should have an individual risk assessment conducted before the most appropriate place of care is determined.

#### Pupils who develop symptoms on site

If a pupil develops symptoms of Covid -19 while at school, we will follow the procedures outlined in the COVID-19 Management Flowchart for Possible/ Confirmed COVID-19 Case in School.

Enhanced cleaning will be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed Covid- 19 has been to minimise risk of the spread of the virus.

#### Recording Attendance

The school will follow the specific DENI guidance on recording pupil attendance.

Decisions regarding the recording attendance of pupil attendance will be decided following the guidance and taking into consideration the individual circumstances of each child. Some children may continue to learn from home due to being clinically vulnerable if they are able to provide evidence from a GP or hospital consultant of an underlying medical condition as well as learning at home. If evidence cannot be provided in terms of either the specific medical condition or that learning is not being completed, then the school will record attendance as an unauthorised absence.

Registration of pupils working from home will take place once per day provided that work is completed as required.