


# Scoil Naomh Fiachra (Clontubrid Mixed N.S.), Covid19 Response Plan

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<b>Scoil Naomh Fiachra Clontubrid Roll No. 16865D</b>	
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## School Covid-19 Response Plan

All schools are required to have a Covid-19 Response Plan in place in order to reopen safely in the new school year.

This document has been prepared on the basis of current public health advice and will continue to be updated as is necessary to comply with HSE and DEoS advice.

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## 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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's 'Resilience and Recovery: The Path Ahead' and the 'Work Safely Protocol' (which is the revised version of 'Return to Work Safely Protocol'), the Department of Education and Skills Plan for School Re-opening 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 any proposals and recommendations in relation to the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol and 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 and running 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 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**
  - a. **School Building**
  - b. **Signage**
3. **Induction Training**
4. **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW) + Appendix 1 Checklist for School Management**
5. **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
6. **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
7. **General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
8. **Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19**
  - a. **Wash your Hands Frequently**
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  - d. **Physical Distancing**
  - e. **Practice Respiratory Hygiene**

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- f. Do
  - g. Do Not
  - h. People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)
  - i. Ventilation
9. Control Measures
- a. Class Bubbles/ Pods
  - b. Return to Work Form
  - c. Induction/ Return to work Training
  - d. Induction Training/ Updated Return to work – On-line Video
  - e. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
  - f. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - g. Wearing of Gloves
  - h. Cleaning
  - i. Access to the School Building / Contact Log
  - j. First Aid / Emergency Procedure
10. Impact of Covid-19 on certain school activities
11. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
12. Special Educational Needs
13. Staff Duties
14. Covid related absence management
15. 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. Scoil Naomh Fiachra (Clontubrid Mixed 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.

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## COVID 19 Policy Statement

**Scoil Naomh Fiachra (Clontubrid Mixed 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 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, 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) \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the continuation of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the work place 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 restrictions and controls are outlined in this document.

### **a. School Buildings**

Before re-opening schools in the new school year schools are reminded to check the following:

- the water system has been flushed at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
- Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
- Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

### **b. Signage**

Signage is displayed throughout the school outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The following is a link to the dedicated area of the Health Protection and Surveillance Centre (HPSC) website where there are a number of posters, including those appropriate for primary school pupils are located. Irish versions are also available here:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/>

## **3. Induction Training**

All new 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 will be updated 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, who is supported in this role by the BOM/ETB

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## 4. 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 be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Staff have been requested to confirm that the details in the Return to Work Form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.***

On receipt of the completed form, the Principal will provide: details of any revised 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.

Details of the working arrangements that apply to the very high risk school staff, is in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, and is detailed in the relevant Department of Education circulars available on the Department's website.

School management will complete the attached Appendix 1 Checklist on return to work.

## 5. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

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 Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

However, 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.

The role of the Lead Worker Representative (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;

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- 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 implementing infection prevention control measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the 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.

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.

Names(s)	Contact details

## 6. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment.

*Updated Risk Assessments to minimise the risk of being exposed to Covid-19* have been published on the school's website.

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## **7. 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 of Coronavirus (which includes the Delta Variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; pupil-pupil, teacher-teacher and teacher- pupil and must be managed in all settings.

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 and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

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

The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene, follow respiratory etiquette and increase ventilation.

*Staff 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.*



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How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms;
- Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- 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, to follow the HSE advice if they are a close contact of a suspected/confirmed case of Covid-19;
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff and pupils are advised to consult and follow latest Government advices in relation to foreign travel;
- Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school (details at Section 9);
- 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;
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point. Visitors to Clontubrid NS will be requested to remain outside the main school door until a member of staff is in a position to allow them to enter the school. All visitors will be requested to sanitise their hands immediately on entry to the school building via the main school front door.
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

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. Scoil Naomh Fiachra (Clontubrid Mixed N.S.), will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

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## 8. Managing the risk of spread of Covid-19

### (a) Wash your hands frequently

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

***There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.***

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>

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- Before they leave their home
- 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.
- ***when entering and exiting vehicles***
- ***when entering and exiting school buildings***
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### (b) Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitiser (when hands are clean).

***Alcohol based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.***

Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in 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 and in each classroom.

### (c) 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.

### (d) Physical distancing

- Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace.
- Principle of distancing can apply in schools but must be applied in a practical way recognising the nature of a learning environment.

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- Adults should maintain 2 metres' distance where possible outside of the teaching environment i.e. staffroom.
- For children with special educational needs maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or reasonable to implement.
- Physical distancing of at least 1 metre should be maintained between individuals in the classroom setting as far as possible.
- The focus should be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which might suggest illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present, children should not attend the school.

## **(e) 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.

## **(f) 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 a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## **(g) 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.

## **(h) 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:

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

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- 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.

(i) ***Ventilation*** *The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools' The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. The Department has also published guidance regarding on how these practical steps measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) monitors.* The windows of each classroom will remain a little open during the day and will be opened wider every half an hour for 5 minutes to ensure movement of fresh clean air.

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## 9. 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:

### **a. Class Bubbles/ Pods**

- All children will return to school and classes will operate within a bubble system.
- The children 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 from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.
- It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. However, in so far as possible, we will aim for the junior room students to remain within their class levels as pods, i.e. Junior Infants will act as one pod, Senior Infants will act as a separate pod and First Class will act as another pod.
- Where possible, a distance of 1 metre will be maintained between children's seating in the Middle and Senior Rooms. However, if this is not possible, children in the Middle and Senior Classrooms will be divided into pods with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods.

### **b. Return to Work Form**

Staff will be required to complete the revised RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 4 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.

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## **c. Induction/Return to work Training**

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building.

All staff will be notified of updated Covid-19 training in the workplace.

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.

## **d. Induction/ Updated Training for Return to School**

The Department has prepared short induction training for schools. It is intended that this training will be updated and become more comprehensive to cover all aspects of the return to school safely protocols.

## **e. 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 are available at multiple locations within the school facility and are available in each classroom.

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

The Department has published "Guidance to Primary and Special Schools on PPE consumables and equipment" on [www.gov.ie/backtoschool](http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool).

This provides schools with the information needed on the appropriate quantities of PPE consumables and equipment to support the full and safe reopening of schools.

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The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education has recommended that face coverings should be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils. The Department has accepted this recommendation. Accordingly, it is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

With this in mind, Medical Grade Masks will be used by staff in the school.

PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- Performing intimate care;
- 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 in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category;
- Administering first aid;
- Parent Teacher meetings.

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

***Schools must provide medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and teachers in special schools and special classes and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs including School Bus Escorts.***

**Update 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021:**

**NPHE has recommended the wearing of face masks/coverings by children aged nine years and above on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings as already required for children aged 13 years and over. They have also recommended that this is introduced for children in 3<sup>rd</sup> Class and above in primary schools. They have advised that this measure is being introduced on a temporary basis and is subject to review in mid-February 2022.**

## **g. Wearing of Gloves:**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for cleaning, intimate care settings and when administering first aid. Routine use 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.

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## ***h. Cleaning***

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school are in place.

The Department of Education has provided additional funding to schools to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19.

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and is covered in the induction training. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected cases of COVID-19. Schools are asked to carefully read and understand the cleaning advice and to apply that to all areas of the school as appropriate.

Schools are reminded to take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for hand washing and toilet facilities.

In summary, each school setting should be cleaned at least once per day. Additional cleaning if available should be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, 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.

There should 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 use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

### **Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present**

The room should be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.

Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.



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Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.

Person assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.

Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).

Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.

Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a canteen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

## ***i. 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 should be maintained.

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

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Scoil Naomh Fiachra (Clontubrid Mixed 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.

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## 10. Impact of Covid-19 on certain school activities

### *Choir/Music Performance:*

Choir practices/performance and music practices/performance involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

### *Sport Activities:*

Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

### *Shared Equipment:*

#### Toys:

- All toys should be cleaned on a regular basis for example weekly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.
- Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.
- When purchasing toys choose ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary).
- If cloth or soft toys are used they should be machine washable.
- Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils to those with special educational needs may be inclined to put into their mouths should be capable of being washed and disinfected.
- All play equipment should be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned they should be discarded.
- Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed.
- At this time soft modelling materials and play dough where used should be for individual use only.

#### Cleaning Procedure for Toys:

- Wash the toy in warm soapy water, using a brush to get into crevices. • Rinse the toy in clean water.
- Thoroughly dry the toy.
- Some hard plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher.
- Toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried.
- In some situations toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning for example: toys/equipment that pupils place in their mouths. Toys/equipment that have been soiled with blood or body fluids or toys where a case of COVID-19 has been identified.

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- If disinfection is required: A chlorine releasing disinfectant should be used diluted to a concentration of 1,000ppm available chlorine. The item should be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

Art: Where possible pupils should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics: Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use and consideration could be given to the use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning.

Musical Equipment/Instruments: To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

Library Policy: Where practical pupils should have their own books. Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Pupils should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

Shared Sports Equipment: Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

## 11. 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 Scoil Naomh Fiachra (Clontubrid Mixed N.S.) will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

***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.***

***A nominated member of the school management team will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to.***

Designated isolation areas have been identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases is in place. A designated isolation area has been created in the school corridor for staff members. Isolation areas will be created at the back of individual classrooms for pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Scoil Naomh Fiachra (Clontubrid Mixed N.S.) the following are the procedures to be implemented:

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- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately;
- Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, 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;
- The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m, a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms 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 should 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, 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 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;
- 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 confidentiality is essential at all times.

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## 12. Special Educational Needs

### *Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs*

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school. Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

#### Hand hygiene:

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.

#### Equipment:

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

The following points can guide the development of such cleaning schedule:

- Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean;
- Care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.  
Cleaning is generally achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water.
- Equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child e.g. toileting aids;
- If equipment is soiled with body fluids:
  - First clean thoroughly with detergent and water;
  - Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant;
  - Rinse with water and dry.

## 13. 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. 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. In this regard and 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;

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- Complete the RTW form before they return to work;
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace;
- New staff 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;
- 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 to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances;
- Follow the HSE guidance if they are identified as a close contact;
- 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;
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above;
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same;
- 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.

## **14. Covid related absence management**

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES. (Circular 42/2021).

## **15. 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.

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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.

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. 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*'.

The EAS is a self-referral service where employees have access to a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. The service is also available via SMS, WhatsApp, e-mail, live chat and call back request. All points of contact for the service are qualified, accredited and experienced mental health professionals.

Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home).

A bespoke wellbeing portal and app is available which offers access to podcasts, blogs, live chats and videos on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. E-Learning programmes across mental health, sleep and a range of wellbeing topics are also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. A series of weekly webinars and live talks to promote staff wellbeing in schools is current available on the wellbeing portal.

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## **Appendix 1 Checklist for School Management**

### **Composite Checklist for Schools**

This checklist supports planning and preparation, control measures and induction needed to support a safe return to school for pupils, staff, parents and others.

For completion by the agreed person with overall responsibility of managing the implementation of the COVID-19 Response plan in line with the supports as agreed with Department of Education.

No.	Question	Yes/No
	<b>Planning &amp; Systems</b>	
1	Is there a system in place to keep up to date with the latest advice from Government and Department of Education, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner to staff and pupils and to adjust your plans and procedures in line with that advice?	
2	Have you prepared a school COVID-19 response plan and made it available to staff and pupils? <i><b>Department guidance and templates provided</b></i>	
3	Have you a system in place to provide staff and pupils with information and guidance on the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and what is expected of them?	
4	Have you displayed the COVID-19 posters in suitable locations highlighting the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?	
5	Have you told staff of the purpose of the COVID-19 contact log?	
6	Have you a COVID-19 contact log in place to support HSE tracing efforts if required? <i><b>(Contact log template attached).</b></i>	
7	Have you informed staff on the measures and provided a system for them to raise issues or concerns and to have them responded to?	
8	Have you reviewed and updated risk assessments in line with DES advice to take account of any controls to help prevent the spread of COVID-19? <i><b>(Risk template attached)</b></i>	
9	Have you updated emergency plans, if necessary to take account of the COVID-19 response plan?	



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	Staff	
10	Have you made available to each staff member a COVID-19 return-to-work form to be completed and returned before they return to the workplace? <b><i>(Template attached)</i></b>	
11	<b><i>Have you requested confirmation that the details in the pre- Return to Work Form remain unchanged following periods of closure such as school holidays?</i></b>	
12	Are you aware of staff members who are at very high risk under the HSE guidance on people most at risk (HSE guidance on people most at-risk) and advised them of the DES agreed arrangements for management of those staff?	
13	Have you advised staff and pupils they must stay at home if sick or if they have any <a href="#">symptoms of COVID-19</a> ?	
14	<b><i>Have you advised staff and pupils not to return to or attend school if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus?</i></b>	
15	<b><i>Have you advised staff and pupils not to return or attend school 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.</i></b>	
16	Have you told staff and pupils what to do and what to expect if they start to develop symptoms of COVID-19 in school, including where the isolation area is?	
17	<b><i>Have you advised 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;</i></b>	
18	Have you advised staff of the availability of the supports of the occupational health and wellbeing programme through Spectrum Life?	
19	Has a lead worker representative been identified (in line with the process agreed with the DES and education partners) and detailed at Section 4.3 of this plan to help advise staff and to monitor compliance with COVID-19 control measures in the school and taken measures to ensure all staff know who the representative is?	
	<b>Training and Induction</b>	
20	Have you advised staff to view the Department of Education's training materials which are available online?	
21	Have you taken the necessary steps to update your school induction / familiarisation training to include any additional information relating to COVID-19 for your school?	
22	Have first aiders, if available, been given updated training on infection prevention and	

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	control re: hand hygiene and use of PPE as appropriate?	
	<b>Buildings/Equipment</b>	
23	If you have mechanical ventilation does it need cleaning or maintenance before the school reopens after periods of closure?	
24	Does your water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaire's Disease?	
25	Have you visually checked, or had someone check, all equipment in the school for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?	
26	Have you arranged for the school, including all equipment, desks, benches, doors and frequent touched surfaces points, to be cleaned once a day	
	<b><u>Infection Prevention Control Measures in place</u></b>	
	<b>Hand/Respiratory Hygiene</b>	
27	Have you accessed supplies of hand sanitisers and any necessary PPE equipment in line with the interim HPSC health guidance from the national framework provided by the Department	
28	Are there hand washing/hand sanitising stations in place to accommodate staff, pupils and visitors adhering to hand hygiene measures in accordance with Department guidance?	
29	Have arrangements been made for staff and pupils to have regular access to hand-washing/hand sanitising facilities as appropriate?	
30	Are hand sanitisers easily available and accessible for all staff, pupils and visitors – e.g. in each classroom and at entry and exit points to school buildings?	
31	Have you made arrangements to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked?	
32	Does the alcohol-based hand sanitiser have at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient?	
33	Have you informed staff about the importance of hand washing?	
34	Have you arranged for staff to view <a href="#">how to wash their hands</a> (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) and dry them correctly through the use of the HSE video resource?	

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35	Have you shown staff and pupils how to use hand sanitiser correctly and where hand-sanitising stations are located?	
36	Have you <a href="#">displayed posters</a> on how to wash hands correctly in appropriate locations?	
37	<p><b><i>Have you told staff and pupils when they need to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser? This includes:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ before and after eating and preparing food</li> <li>↳ after coughing or sneezing</li> <li>↳ after using the toilet</li> <li>↳ where hands are dirty</li> <li>↳ before and after wearing gloves</li> <li>↳ before and after being on public transport</li> <li>↳ before leaving home</li> <li>↳ when arriving/leaving the school /other sites</li> <li>↳ <b><i>when entering and exiting vehicles</i></b></li> <li>↳ <b><i>when entering and exiting school buildings</i></b></li> <li>↳ after touching potentially contaminated surfaces</li> <li>↳ if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms</li> </ul>	
38	<p>Has you told staff and pupils of the importance of good respiratory measures to limit the spread of the virus?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↳ avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth</li> <li>↳ cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue</li> <li>↳ dispose of tissues in a covered bin</li> </ul>	
	<b>Physical Distancing</b>	
39	Have you identified all available school space to be used to maximise physical distancing?	
40	Have you reviewed the templates provided by the Department of Education which show options for revised layout of school rooms to meet physical distancing	

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	requirements?	
41	Have you arranged to revise the layout of the rooms and furniture as per the Department guidelines if necessary?	
42	Have you arranged in each room that the teacher's desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks?	
43	Have you arranged in each room that pupils would be at least 1m away from each other?	
44	Have you allocated work stations consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces that are shared?	
45	Have you structured pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles to the extent that this is practical?	
46	If you have divided a class into Pods, have you arranged at least 1m distance between individual Pods within the class bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible?	
47	Have you taken steps to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those class bubbles) as much as possible?	
48	Have you arranged Pod sizes to be as small as it is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context?	
49	Have you arranged to the greatest extent possible for pupils and teaching staff to be consistently in the same Class Bubbles acknowledging that this will not be possible at all times?	
50	Have you arranged where possible that different class bubbles to have separate breaks and meal times or separate areas at break or meal times?	
51	Have you made arrangements to limit interaction on arrival and departure from school and in other shared areas?	
52	Have you encouraged walking or cycling to school as much as possible?	
53	Have you made arrangements, in so far as practicable, to open additional access points to school to reduce congestion?	
54	Can you provide a one system for entering and exiting the school, where practical?	

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55	Have you arranged for staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing?	
56	Have you a system to regularly remind staff and pupils to maintain physical distancing	
57	Have you advised staff not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact?	
58	<b><i>Have you advised staff of the Department's guidance to achieve good ventilation</i></b>	
59	<b><i>Have you checked any mechanical ventilation systems to ensure an adequate supply of fresh air is used</i></b>	
	<b>Visitors to Schools</b>	
60	Have you identified the activities that involve interacting with essential visitors to the school, made arrangements to minimise the number of such visitors and put in place measures to prevent physical contact, as far as possible?	
61	Are there arrangements in place to inform essential visitors to the school of the measures to help prevent the spread of infection?	
62	Have you a system in place for all visitors who do need to come to the school to make appointment, arrange to contact a central point and to record their visit using the contact tracing log?	