**St**

**St Joseph’s Primary School**

**Gorey**

**Covid 19 Response Plan – Information for Parents**

As we all adjust to our safe return to school life it has been necessary to draw up significant changes in our procedures and how we do things. We ask for your patience, understanding and cooperation as we navigate our way through them.

Our priority at all times is the continued safety of our pupils, staff and yourselves at home. Thank you all so much for your continued support.

**Morning Assembly**

There will no longer be class assembly in the morning. To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school grounds we would ask that children would walk from the school gates if at all possible.

Unfortunately it will not be possible for parents/guardians to access the school building under any circumstances. I appreciate this will be very difficult for some parents but your co-operation on the matter is essential. It may be necessary to prepare your son/daughter for this.

Children can access the school from **8.30am to 8.50am**. Children will access the school through the main entrance at the top of the steps where there will be a sanitiser station. Children should sanitise their hands and proceed directly to their classroom. There should be no congregation at the front door and if parents are dropping children they should keep moving, following the one way system. There will be staff outside and inside the school door to guide children to their respective classrooms.

**School Dismissal**

There will be a staggered dismissal time and each class will be assigned a door from which the class will leave at their appointed time.

* Junior Infants 1.20pm
* Senior Infants 1.30pm
* Fifth and Sixth Classes 2.20pm
* Third and Fourth Classes 2.25pm
* First and Second Classes 2.30pm

Older siblings may have to wait to collect brothers and sisters, but we would ask children to vacate the school as quickly as possible, and there is to be no congregation of parents. It might be necessary to tell your son/daughter to meet you further down the driveway to ensure there are not large groups of people congregating together.

Please follow the one way system at all times.

**Travel Home from Abroad**

In accordance with Government Policy, which is based on official public health advice, the Department of Foreign Affairs continues to advice against non-essential travel overseas. This includes Great Britain but not Northern Ireland and it also includes all travel by cruise ship. Travel to a very limited set of locations is exempted from this advice. Individuals arriving from these locations will not be requested to restrict their movements upon entry.

The school has a duty of care to all of its pupils and staff members.

If a school has reasonable grounds for believing that its duty of care toward its staff and pupils is being undermined in circumstances where a person – staff member or pupil - has not observed the mandatory requirement to restrict their movements for 14 days ie not attend school, following return from a non-green list country, it is reasonable for the school to refuse access to the pupil or staff member for the period.

 Further travel advice for Irish Citizens is provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade.

**Parents in the school yard or building**

During the normal school day no parents are permitted to be in the school yard or school building. Children being collected will meet their parent at the front door of the school.

**Uniforms/School Tracksuit**

There has been no guidance from the Department of Education in relation to wearing school uniforms.  We would ask parents to ensure your child’s uniform is clean.  It may be useful to have a spare clean uniform/school tracksuit.

**Hygiene and Cleaning**

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, at the door of each classroom, etc. Soap (which emulsifies at low temperatures) and water is available in all classrooms and toilets.

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

**Handwashing and Sanitising Regime for Children**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Cleaning Method** |
| Upon entering school | Sanitiser |
| Before eating at break and Lunch | Handwashing |
| After returning from the yard after break and lunch | Handwashing |
| Before going home | Sanitiser \* |
| After using toilet | Handwashing |

\*Children should wash their hands when they return home after school.

All touch areas and toilets will be cleaned following break/lunch time and the school will receive a clean each day once all children have gone home.

**Changes to classroom layout**

The children and their teachers will work in class bubbles. A class bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class - 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 so there is no requirement for children from junior infants to 2nd class to maintain a physical distance within their class bubble.

Children from 3rd class to 6th class will be distanced insofar as is practicable, with 1m distancing between Pods. Teachers will modify their classrooms to create as much space as possible, removing all excess furniture.

**Lunches**

Children are required to keep their lunches in their own bags. Lunch Boxes and drink bottles should be labelled and also should be washed each day when children return home from school.

**PPE**

Teachers are required to wear face masks/visors when physical distance of 2metres cannot be maintained.  Children are not expected to wear face masks.

**Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, an SEN teacher will supervise the class.

**Children who cannot attend school**

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

* Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.
* Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19.
* Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
* Children who have been in contact with a person in their family who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
* Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
* Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
* Children who are generally unwell eg vomiting, high temperature, diarrhoea

**Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

If the school is notified that a person in your child’s class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

Public health advice will be sought and followed.

**Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

* Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately – please ensure all contact details are up to date and in use, and also provide the name and number of a contact who will be in a position to collect a child promptly.
* The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times
* A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms.
* He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
* The school will arrange for the child to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms.
* Public transport of any kind should not be used
* If a child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and seek advice which will be followed
* Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

**FAQ’s**

**Can I send in a bottle of sanitiser with my child?**

Yes, but please remind your child it is for personal use and it may only be used with the permission of the teacher. Regulations stipulate that children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.

**Can my child wear a facemask?**

It is not recommended that children attending primary school or preschool/childcare settings wear face-coverings.

**Will staff be wearing facemasks?**

Yes, at times. And possibly visors also.

**Will parent/teacher meetings be taking place?**

At the moment no. Suggested forms of communication with the class teacher is by phone or e mail.

**What happens if my child forgets their lunch or drinks?**

The school will contact you so you can drop one to the school for your child.

**My child has hay fever and sneezes quite a bit, will he/she be sent home?**

If your child has an underlying condition such as hay fever (as many of us have) please make sure the class teacher is aware. 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

**What if my child is sent home with a suspected case of Covid 19?**

We would advise that you contact your GP/HSE for further advice. **If a child is unwell, they should under no circumstances be sent back to school.**

**Are parents permitted in the school building?**

No.

**My child is in a “pod” with some other children, can they still play with their other classmates at break time?**

Yes, absolutely, when out in the yard. On wet days, the children will remain in their pods. But they can still chat with children in other pods as long as they keep the distance between the pods.

**Are 3rd to 6th classes in “pods”?**

At the start of the school year we will be distancing pupils as much as possible, with approximately 1m between all pods. This will not eliminate pupils from interacting with each other or prevent talk and discussion.

**What happens if my child falls on yard /gets a bump or cut?**

Our first aid policy will be followed, but staff is required to wear PPE to administer first aid.

**Why can some of the classes not mix?**

Our procedures are governed by Dept. of Education guidelines, which state that every effort must be made to limit the amount of contact between “bubbles” i.e. classes

**Will teachers talk to the children about Covid 19?**

Yes, from day one we will be re-teaching cough etiquette, hand hygiene, reinforcing the idea of social distancing/reduced physical contact, and chatting (in an age appropriate way) about Covid 19. The aim will be on reassurance and promoting calmness and safety.

