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**Covid 19**

**School Response Plan & Policy**

***(Updated and Amended August 2021)***

**.A. Introduction**

This document has been prepared on the basis of current public health advice and shall be amended / updated as the current situation evolves and further advice is received from the HSE and/or DES.

This Covid 19 Response Plan is designed to support the Staff and Board of Management of Scoil Bhride Cluain na Slí in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of the virus at our school.

Our SBC Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our 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 protocols to minimise the risk to pupils, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHET continues to evolve, these protocols and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The Response Plan & Policy will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding the objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children at SBC.

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 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 this plan.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should error or omission be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measurers can be taken to rectify same.

*Notes:*

*1) 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*

*2)* *The Steering Group for the Safe and Sustainable Re-Opening of SBC recommend that the practical matters outlined in the document "Parent Information on the School Re-Opening Logistical Plan" be held as an attachment /appendix to this Policy and it should be referred to by all our stakeholders,-Teachers, Parents, Pupils and members of the local community. This document was also updated in August 2021.*

1. **Scoil Bhríde Cluain na Slí COVI19 Policy**

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the Reopening 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 all staff, pupils, parents and others.

**COVID 19 Policy Statement**

SBC 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, parents and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and DES.
* display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
* agree with staff, a Lead Worker Representative (and Deputy LWR) who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
* inform all staff and students of essential Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette and Physical Distancing Requirements
* adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the public health guidance and direction from the Department of Education
* keep a Visitor Contact Log to help with contact tracing
* ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education & 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 students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
* implement a Cleaning Plan in line with Department of Education advice

All stakeholders 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,- Siobhan O'Donoghue

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

1. **Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. To that end, a Steering Group comprising of the BOM, the School Staff and representation from the Parents' Association has been assembled. This group held if first official meeting on 10/8/'20. Our return to work will be done as safely as possible 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.

Our August 2021 re-opening will replicate the vast majority of what we put in place throughout the School-Year 2020-2021.

1. **School Buildings**

Before re-opening SBC we have carried out the following checks:.....

* The effectiveness of our hot water tank and gravitiy controlled circulation system
* Taps and hot/cold water flow.
* If the water system needed flushing at outlets following low usage (to prevent Legionella Disease).
* Ventilation has been checked for signs of deterioration or damage
* Ensure that bin collections and other essential services have resumed.

**(b) Signage**

We at SBC will display all relevant signage outlining the signs/symptoms of COVID 19 and also those that promote necessary hand/respiratory hygiene / etiquette. On 10/8/'20 our Steering Group appointed Assistant Principal, Ms. Deirdre Molloy to take responsibility for this particular area. All such signage shall be displayed in prominent areas of the school such as entrances, exits, reception, corridors, office, staffroom, classrooms, bathrooms, toilets etc. The signage has been sourced from number of resources including the DES, IPPN, the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) Website and also from commercial suppliers of hygiene products.

**(c) Cleaning**

After being closed for so long, the School is probably more Coronavirus-free than one might otherwise imagine. However, in advance of re-opening, the school will undergo a thorough cleaning in line with DES Protocols. At the Steering Group Meeting 10/8/'20, Deputy Principal Mrs. Siobhán O'Donoghue and the BOM Health & Safety and Maintenance Officer, Mr. Richard Fitzpatrick accepted the responsibility for taking charge of our new School Cleaning Plan. Both have already identified the need to hire an extra Part-Time Ancillary Staff Cleaner to attend to the COVID-19 specific cleaning tasks at SBC. An enhanced cleaning programme to help minimise the risk of infection at SBC has subsequently been in place since August 2020.

**(d) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**

In order to return to the workplace, all staff will complete a Return to Work (RTW) form and associated Back to School Safely Checklist for Staff Members. These will be completed at **least 3 days** 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 also further information on additional health and safety measures in place at SBC to facilitate each staff member's return to the school facility.

*Note: Induction Training for Staff will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.*

**3. 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. At SBC, our Leadership & Management Team is made up of Mr. O'Sullivan (Principal) Mrs. O'Donoghue (Deputy Principal) and Miss Molloy ( Assistant Principal). 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. At the first meeting of our Steering Group held on 10/8/'20, Mrs. O'Donoghue was appointed from the Teaching Staff to this position. (Our School Secretary, Mrs. Geraldine Fitzpatrick, was appointed from the Non-Teaching Staff to the position of Deputy LWR)

The role of the Lead Worker Representative (and her Deputy) is to ensure that Covid-19 Measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:.....

* Work collaboratively with the BOM 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 to the BOM 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 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.

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 School Covid-19 Response Plan & Policy and associated control measures.

**4. Safety Statement & Risk Assessment**

Scoil Bhríde has a long - standing Health & Safety Statement/Policy active at the School. However, COVID 19 represents a new hazard in the overall context of Health & Safety in the School environment. To that end, our Steering Group has decided to establish a stand alone COVID 19 Safety Statement & Risk Assessment. At the Steering Group Meeting held on 10/8/'20, Deputy Principal Mrs. O'Donoghue and BOM Health & Safety and Maintenance Officer, Richard Fitzpatrick agreed to take the lead in producing this plan. Great consideration will be given to:...

* Carrying out a thorough Risk Assessment to identify both the hazards and the control measures required to mitigate and/or manage the risk of COVID 19 at SBC.
* Reviewing existing emergency procedures involving accidents and injury, dangerous occurrences, first aid, fire safety etc in order to consider any new risks that arise due to COVID 19 and our response to same.
* Any potential changes to the school's current/usual Health & Safety Protocols/Procedures and associated existing Risk Assessments. All/Any changes applied will be documented.

*Note: Our Covid 19 Risk Assessment was reviewed in August 2021 and deemed fit for purpose prior to the re-opening of the school on August 30th.*

**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. These 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 a school 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:....

* 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 not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
* If they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
* If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
* 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.
* 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;
* 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 a 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 would be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point. ie Reception Space outside the Secure Door at the front of the School.

Staff, pupils and visitors will 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. We at SBC will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils, parents and visitors in a timely manner. On 10/8/'20 our Steering Group appointed Ms. Paula Parkinson (SET Team Leader), Mrs. Caroline Brazil (Chairperson Parents' Association) and Mrs. Geraldine Fitzpatrick (School Secretary and Deputy LWR) to the role of Communications Officers in all areas of COVID 19 related correspondences to our school community. All such correspondences will carry the authority of the BOM and must be viewed/agreed by the Principal prior to circulation. Our COVID 19 Communication Officers will keep a record of all communications circulated among our School Community or posted on the new COVID 19 Tab for "The Safe and Sustainable Reopening of SBC" which can be found on the School Website.

Our school has studied closely all advice received from the HSE and Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) in preparation for the Re-Opening of SBC. Such advice continues to be updated in line with public health advice and will guide us in developing our containment measures in the weeks/months ahead.

***Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19***

1. **Wash your hands frequently.**

Regular hand washing with soap and water is most effective for the removal of COVID-19. Our Teachers will instruct and regularly remind the pupils on the HSE advised correct technique for hand-washing. We recommend that parents follow up on this work in the home.

For advice from the HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:

https://www2.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html

Pupils will be requested to wash their hands regularly at school. Examples include the following times:

* Upon arrival at school
* Before eating or drinking
* After using the toilet
* Entering/Exiting the School Building
* Entering/Exiting vehicles
* After playing outdoors/sporting activities
* Whenever their hands are visibility dirty
* After they cough or sneeze
* After activities that are likely to soil hands

Hand Sanitiser is recommended to be only used on clean hands,- thence the importance of regular and thorough hand-washing to protect your child from COVID 19.

1. **Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers.**

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitisers (when hands are clean) At SBC, Hand Sanitising Units have been established in the following locations:….

* Front Entrance
* Rear Entrance
* Each Classroom

Children will be expected to use Hand Sanitiser when leaving/entering the building / classroom.

1. **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.

*Note: Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stocked or used near heat or naked flames*

1. **Physical distancing**

 Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace. Guidance on the operation of physical distancing requirements is informed by the Public Health Advice for Schools. At SBC we will endeavour to pursue such guidance among parents, pupils, staff and all visitors to the school grounds/building. Above all else, our primary concern will be to:...

- Minimise Risk

- Manage Risk

From a Physical Distancing point of view, this will mean:....

- Decreased interaction and close contact

- Increased separation/segregation

To achieve this, we at SBC will employ physical distancing techniques:-

- In the arrangement of Classroom Bubbles

- In the organising of Classroom Pods

-Morning arrival

-Evening departure

-Late arrival

-Entry/Exit

-Lining up

-Break/Play times

-Movement on the corridor/throughout the school/in lines

-Staff Room and Staff Movements.

*Notes:*

1. *Each classroom in the school will now be its own independent group or "Bubble". Class Bubbles will also be segregated at break times. This is to ensure that children only mix with others within their own classroom but social distancing is still adhered to.*
2. *Where possible, smaller groups called “Pods” will be created within the classroom. The aim is for children to only interact closely with others in their own “Pod” within the whole classroom group.*
3. *The DES has made no requirement for physical distancing up to and including 2nd Class. From classes 3rd to 6th, a physical distancing of 1m is required if/where possible.*
4. *The physical layout of classrooms at SBC will be altered to create more space where possible, -thereby facilitating the opportunity to accommodate more physical distancing.*
5. *The school yard has also been altered slightly to cater for five Classroom “Bubbles”.*
6. **Visitors**

To ensure a controlled and safe/hygienic environment, only staff members of SBC will be allowed access to the school building. Visitors are not allowed into the school unless they have a prior appointment. Casual visitations are completely discouraged. The back door and bottom corridor double doors will be locked throughout the day. The only entry is via the front door. Even then, access through the Secure Door will be by appointment only. No Appointment = No Access

1. **Practice Respiratory Hygiene**

Everybody at SBC will 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. Teachers will regularly demonstrate/revise such techniques with the pupils. Parents are encouraged to build on these habits at home. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect those around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid 19. Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly/regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. Therefore, it is crucial that everybody adheres to this advice.

**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.

* Use hand sanitiser when entering/leaving the building / classroom or when entering and exiting vehicles.

**Don't**

• Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

• Share objects that touch your mouth, – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

1. **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: …….

* 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. However, if is generally held that any individual presenting with such conditions receive clearance from their GP before coming into SBC. 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.

**.6. Procedure for Returning to Work for SBC Staff**

(a) Staff will be required to complete an updated RTW Form August 2021 and Associated Checklist at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility. (See Section 2 (d) above)

 The purpose of the RTW Form/Checklist is to get confirmation from all staff that to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid 19 and is not self-isolating/cocooning or awaiting the results of a COVID 19 Test.

(b) All staff will also undertake and complete DES COVID 19 Induction Training prior to returning to work. (See Section 7 (ii) below)

**.7. 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. They shall continue to be reviewed/updated as required on an ongoing basis. It is critical that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of and adhere to the control measures outlined and that they fully co-operate with all Health & 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.*

1. ***Staff, Return to work Form/ Checklist***

(already described in Section 2(d) and Section .6. (b) above.

1. ***Induction Training for staff***

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to work. 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 & Policy, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the LWR and/or Principal.

*Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff. Training will cover all aspects of the Return to School Safely Protocols.*

1. **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 etc. 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. Miss Molloy has been appointed by our Steering Group on 10/8/'20 to take responsibility for this particular area.

 Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers will be available at multiple locations within the school and classrooms. (See Section 5 above.)

The Department has arranged for a drawdown framework to be established to enable schools purchase hand-sanitisers and any other necessary PPE supplies for use in the school. The procurement process for this framework has already commenced and it is intended these materials will be available in early August.

1. **Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

According to current occupational and public health guidance, Primay School children are not required to wear face coverings or PPE at school. However, our Teachers, SNAs and School Secretary will wear a mask/visor when working with the pupils in the school setting. It is now required that all School Staff wear masks where social distancing of more than two meters cannot be maintained.

(The use of a face covering will conceal facial expression and can make communication difficult and as such may not be practical in a school setting. However the wearing of a visor as an alternative to a facial covering is necessary where there is a concern that physical distancing cannot be maintained, there will be prolonged close contact and/or that exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets is likely.)

SBC will provide Medical Grade Masks in the EN16483 category to all SETs/SNAs and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with SEN and/or intimate care needs. Some of our Teaching/SNA Staff have chosen to wear “smocks” or aprons at work at well.

Ancillary Caretaking/Cleaning Staff must wear either a mask or visor. Apron and gloves will also be provided for these members of staff. For a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities/areas.

Such to include roles where: ….

• Performing intimate care

• Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated as appropriate and in line with advice from the HPSC.

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

*Note:*

*The use of disposable gloves in the school setting* ***by pupils or staff*** *is not appropriate. It 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.*

1. **Cleaning**

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made. These shall be attended to by our Ancillary Staff Caretaker/Cleaner and our newly appointed Covid 19 Enhanced Cleaner. Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted,- in particular, toilets, sinks, bathrooms, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

 All Teachers will have access to their own basket of appropriate cleaning products and will be required to maintain the cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from each individual classroom.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their own work area before and after use each day. In the Staff Room staff must use/clean their own utensils (cup, cutlery, plate, lunch-box etc) There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices, classrooms and other areas within the school facility.

A new School Plan for Environmental Cleaning will be drawn up by Deputy Principal Mrs. Siobhan O’Donoghue and the BOM Health & Safety and Maintenance Officier, Mr. Richard Fitzpatrick.

1. **Access to the School Building / Visitors and Contact Tracing**

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. All visits will be prior appointment only

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 to the workplace. A detailed **Sign In/Sign Out Log** of those entering the school facilities will be maintained, whilst SBC will also operate a **Contact Tracing Log for all External Visitors to the School.** We also maintain a log for Early Leavers/Collection from School.

*(We at SBC also hold/maintain a file containing details of staff, pupil and emergency contacts should the need arise)*

1. **First Aid/Emergency Procedure**

The standard First Aid/Emergency Procedure shall continue to apply at SBC. We have long standing and effective policies in place at our school which deal with First Aid; Accidents/Injury on the School Yard etc. Obviously, staff will now require to exercise extra care re COVID 19 Protocols when attending to any pupil who may have experienced a scratch/scrape/bang/bump/fall etc and who is visibly upset or in pain. All the standard techniques for physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette must now demand close observation whilst attending to the child in question.

1. **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’* 30/11/’20. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools whereby 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.

**.8. 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 SBC will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

All School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

 A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. At SBC, this can be found at the Servery which is located behind a closed door and is away from other staff/pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Scoil Bhríde the following are the procedures to be implemented:.....

* Managing the situation = Principal or Deputy Principal.
* 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
* Entry to the isolation room/area will be from the main corridor. Exit will be via the Gym and through the double doors at the back of the hall.
* 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.
* Keep a record of the incident.
* Contact the DES and/or HSE for advice on what to do next. (eg Should the school close?)

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/family confidentiality is essential at all times.

The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs/symptoms of COVID 19 at the same time have been considered. Alternative Isolation areas have been identified in the Library and/or IT Room if necessary. The procedures outlined above will apply in all such cases.

**.9. 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:.....

1. 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.
2. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
3. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
4. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.
5. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
6. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined in Section 8 above.
7. Complete the newly updated RTW Form & Checklist before they return to work. The newly updated RTW Form Feb ’21 should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Staff are requested (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure,- such as school holidays.
8. 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.
9. Must complete DES Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
10. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
11. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
12. Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
* if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
* 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.
1. Cooperate with any public health personnel and SBC for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
2. Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required at SBC as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

**.10.Covid related Absence Management**

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be done so in line with agreed procedures of the DES. Obviously, substitution will be sought and the Teacher/SNA/Staff Member in question shall not return to work until Covid-19 free and cleared by their own GP to do so. If a Substitute Teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other Classroom Bubbles. Every possible effort will be made to supervise the particular class in question by tapping into the staff resources already available on site (SET and SNA). In the most extreme situation where we cannot source a Substitute Teacher or provide supervision from within our own staff then it may not be possible for the class in question to attend school on a particular day/days. In such cases, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

**.11. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the Health & 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 & 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 & 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 and/or LWR/Deputy Principal.

**.B. Underlying Principles of this Plan/Policy**

* The school has a responsibility to make efforts to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all members of our school community,-children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
* Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
* It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
* As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

**.C. Ratification and Review**

This Policy Document as presented in its current form was originally researched by our Covid 19 Steering Group (made up of the BOM; School Staff; Representatives from the Parents' Association) during July/August 2020 in preparation for the school re-opening on August 27th 2020. It was fully ratified by the BOM at a meeting held on 24/8/2020. It has been subsequently updated in August 2021 in response to changing circumstances and the return to classes in August 2021. This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure its compliance with the full and prevailing requirements of the HSE and DES. It is a live document and shall be amended/adjusted as the current COVID 19 situation evolves. This updated policy was uploaded onto the School Website under the Tab "Covid 19 SBC Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Re - Opening of our School" following ratification on 25/8/’21 and a text sent to all parents advising them of its enactment.

 Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson BOM)

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Principal)

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