



Covid-19 Response Plan

*for the safe and sustainable reopening of
St. Vincent de Paul Infant School*

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 St. Vincent de Paul Infant School.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

It is important that the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by 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 of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
 - a. *School Building*
 - b. *Signage*
3. Procedure for Returning to Work
4. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representatives
5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
6. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
 - a. *Wash your Hands Frequently*
 - b. *Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser*
 - c. *Avoid Touching your Eyes, Nose and Mouth*
 - d. *Physical Distancing*
 - e. *Practice Respiratory Hygiene*
 - h. *People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)*
7. Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19
8. Control Measures
 - a. *Return to Work Form*

- b. Induction Training*
- c. Induction Training – On-line Video*
- d. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette*
- e. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*
- f. Wearing of Gloves*
- g. Cleaning*
- h. Access to the School Building / Contact Log*
- i. First Aid / Emergency Procedure*

9. Specific Control Measures for St. Vincent de Paul Infant School

10. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

11. Staff Duties

12. Covid related absence management

13. 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, www.dbei.ie www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie;

St. Vincent de Paul Infant School's Covid-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

COVID-19 Policy Statement

St. Vincent de Paul Infant School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- 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 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, who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson BOM

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Principal

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. The return to the work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

Details for the reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

School Buildings

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

- Does the water system need flushing 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?

Signage

Schools will be required to display signage 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, located. Irish versions are also available here:

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

Schools can download the posters and display in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets. Schools do not need to do this now as the posters may be updated during the summer and further information will issue on signage closer to planned reopening.

Procedure for Returning to Work

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 only be completed at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

Note March 2021: A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. School will request staff (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.

On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide: details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility

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

The role of the worker representatives is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Name of Lead Worker Representatives	Contact Details
Catherine Kennedy, Principal Leanne Drought, Deputy Principal Aindrea Burke, Assistant Principal I Caroline Maher, Assistant Principal II Jill Owens, Assistant Principal II	[info@svdpinfants.ie]

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.

Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in St. Vincent de Paul Infant School has been completed.

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). Please regularly check the HSE website as this list of symptoms may change due to variants etc.

https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/symptoms/overview/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIImuz8l8nQ8gIVFRvnCh1R-w5DEAAYASAAEgL5a_D_BwE&gclid=aw.ds

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

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:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.

- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID-19 not to attend schools and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.

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. St. Vincent de Paul Infant School will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19

Wash your Hands Frequently

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

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

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

Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitisers (when hands are clean). Sinks are now installed in every classroom: Children and staff have 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

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, in each classroom, Learning Support Room, PE Hall, staffroom, Sensory Room, office and Isolation Room.

Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth

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

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace.

Note: Guidance on the physical distancing requirements will be informed by public health advice for schools.

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. Carbon Dioxide monitors will be used in every class to assess the purity of the air within the school.

Use of PPE in schools

Medical Grade Masks

There is a minimum requirement for schools to provide medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and support teachers. St Vincent de Paul Infant school committed to providing FFP2/KN95 masks to all staff in the initial reopening phase of our school following the January-March 2021 School Closure. The school constantly reviews this guidance and currently sees fit that staff members are offered a number of medical grade mask types.

Practise 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 Covid-19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus.

It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

Do:

- ✓ Wash your hands properly and often
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- ✓ Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

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.

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 Down Syndrome
- have [cancer](#) and are being treated with chemotherapy or similar drugs other than hormone therapy
- have lung or head and neck cancer and are having radical surgery or radiotherapy
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer or head and neck cancer
- are having certain complex cancer surgery, for example, surgery for lung cancer, head and neck cancer or oesophageal cancer
- have advanced cancer or cancer that has spread to another part of the body
- are on dialysis or have end-stage [kidney disease](#) and an eGFR less than 15
- have a condition affecting the brains or nerves that has significantly affected your ability to breathe, meaning you require non-invasive ventilation (such as motor neurone disease or spinal muscular atrophy)
- have [unstable or severe cystic fibrosis](#), including people waiting for a transplant
- have severe respiratory conditions including [Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency](#), [severe asthma](#), pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and [severe COPD](#)
- have uncontrolled diabetes
- have had an organ transplant or are waiting for a transplant

- have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the last 12 months, or are waiting for a transplant
- have a rare condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as APECED or errors in the interferon pathway)
- sickle cell disease
- have been treated with drugs such as Rituximab, Cyclophosphamide, Alemtuzumab, Cladribine or Ocrelizumab in the last 6 months
- have certain inherited metabolic disorders (such as Maple Syrup Urine Disease)
- have [obesity](#) with a body mass index (BMI) greater than 40

The advice for this group and pregnant teachers 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.

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:

Return to Work Form

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

Induction Training

All 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 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.

Induction Training for Return to School

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

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 should be available in each classroom.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

It is now recommended that teachers and other staff members wear face coverings when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. For the purposes of maintaining a distance of 2 metres while teaching, teachers' desks and whiteboard areas will be clearly marked as "teacher only zone" and Perspex will be installed on teachers' desks. The wearing of a visor as an alternative to a facial covering may be considered 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.

For a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.

Such 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 in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre).

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

Wearing of Gloves

The long-term 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.

Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, lifts, door handles etc. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Staff should clean any areas used during their break time in the staffroom i.e. table, chair, out of courtesy for the next group.

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

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. The school should maintain a log of staff and students contacts.

First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in St. Vincent de Paul Infant School.

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.

Specific Control Measures for St. Vincent de Paul Infant School

Drop Off and Collections

In devising a plan for drop offs and collections, St. Vincent de Paul Infant School considered the following:

- ✓ Each class grouping should mix only with their own class bubble.
- ✓ A distance of 2 metres between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians **and** the school staff should be maintained.
- ✓ Congregations should be avoided.
- ✓ Walking/Cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible.

Therefore, it was decided to implement staggered drop off and collection times, so that not all children arrive onsite at one time. In instances where siblings attend the school, please drop in your children at the latest class time allocated. If one of your children's classes have already gone in to the school building as you facilitate thus, please notify a staff member at the front door of the school who will escort your child directly to class.

School begins on Monday 30th August. In the best interests of our new Junior Infant pupils, they are invited to start their school experience on Monday August 30th with a short 'Meet and Greet' session in small groups.

The official school day begins for Junior Infant pupils on Tuesday August 31st at 9:10am. The Junior Infant pupils will finish at an earlier time of 12pm for two weeks from Tuesday 31st August to Friday 10th September to build towards their "long" school day. All of information regarding same will be sent to junior infant parents in a separate email.

Each class will be assigned a gate and a drop off point. One adult may accompany the child onto the school grounds for the purposes of drop off. The class teacher will wait at the drop off point and the children will line up behind. The adult must "drop and fly" and exit through the main gate while maintaining a distance of 2 metres between other parents **and** school staff. We recommend that any adult who enters the school grounds wear a mask.

Parents/Guardians will receive an email containing a diagram of the drop off procedure and their specific gate and drop off point.

From August 31st 2021 to October 14th the Drop and Collection Procedure is as follows;

<u>Class</u>	<u>Drop Off Time</u>
First Class:	9:00am
Senior Infants:	9:05am
Junior Infants:	9:10am

Collections will be done in reverse. The class teacher will bring the children to the drop off/collection point. The parent will enter through the assigned gate, collect their child and exit promptly through the main gate while maintaining the 2 metre distance.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Collection Time</u>
First Class:	2:00pm
Senior Infants:	1:50pm
Junior Infants:	1:40pm from September 13 th .

**If physical distancing does not take place, the school will revisit the plan and drop off/collection procedures will be staggered further.*

Rainy Day Procedures

Please arrive at the usual designated time for your child's class as follows :

First Class 9:00

Senior Infants 9:05

Junior Infants 9:10

The entry point for classes will be as follows:

Church Side Gate All FIRST CLASSES & JUNIOR INFANTS ROOM 2 + 3

Credit Union Side Gate ALL SENIOR INFANT CLASSES & JUNIOR INFANTS ROOM 4 + 5 + 6

From October 15th 2021 the Drop (Filtered not Staggered) and Collection Procedure (Staggered) is as follows;

ARRIVALS

Please arrive anytime at your discretion between 9:00am and 9:20am. Walk your child in through their designated gate where they will be ushered by members of staff towards their designated entrance and in to their classroom. Parents/Guardians all depart through the middle gate.

FIRST CLASS & JUNIOR INFANTS Room 2+ 3 9:00am- 9:20am Church side gate and prefab side entrance.

SENIOR INFANTS & JUNIOR INFANTS Room 4,5 +6 9:00am- 9:20am Credit union side gate and hall annex side entrance.

COLLECTIONS

Please collect your child from class teacher at designated cone in front of the school.

JUNIOR INFANTS 1:50pm Room 2, 3 + 4 Church side gate/Room 5 + 6 Credit Union Side Gate

SENIOR INFANTS 1:55pm Room 10, 11 +12 Church Side Gate/Room 8 + 9 Credit Union Side Gate

FIRST CLASS 2:00pm Room 13, 1A +2A Church Side Gate/Room 14 + 1 Credit Union Side Gate

The Classroom

When setting up our classrooms, St. Vincent de Paul Infant School considered the following:

- ✓ Increase separation
- ✓ Decrease interaction

It was decided that all available space in the school should be availed of in order to safely maximise physical distancing. The staff will remove non-essential furniture and items from the classroom. The class space should be reconfigured to maximise physical distancing. The teacher's desk should be placed at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil's desks. Floor markings indicate where the "teacher only zone" lies and the staff will be given the option of having Perspex fitted to their desks.

A common-sense approach is required in recognising the limits to which decreasing interaction between pupils can be achieved. Each child will be given an assigned seat at a table with pupils from their class. This will be the child's *pod*. The pod should be at least 1m from the other pods. Sharing educational material between pods should be avoided/minimised where possible.

The aim of the system within the school, is that each class grouping (*bubble*) mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The pods within those class bubbles is an additional measure and seeks to assist in the efficient sanitising and rotation of class resources, it is not a measure to limit the children's interaction with peers within the class, as this is not a required guidance given the difficulty in maintaining same with young children. The table seating arrangements within the class will be changed during the year to aide social interaction. Regardless of where your child sits in the class it is to be understood that they will be interacting with all peers in the class throughout the day at different times and not solely with peers at their table. To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same class bubbles although this will not be possible at all times. Staff members such as SET who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible.

Timetabling

When devising a system for shared spaces, St. Vincent de Paul Infant School considered the following:

- ✓ Increase separation
- ✓ Decrease interaction

First Class	Senior Infants	Junior Infants <i>from Sept. 13th</i>
9:00 – Drop Off	9:05 – Drop Off	9:10 – Drop Off
10.30 – PE <i>weekly</i>	10.45 – Yard	9.45 – PE <i>weekly</i>
11.15 – Yard	11.15 – PE <i>weekly</i>	10.30 – Small Break
1:15 Small Break	12.45 – Small Break	11.45 – Yard
2.00 – Home	1.50 – Home	1.40 – Home

The yard will be divided into 5 zones to ensure each class bubble is separate from others. There will be a middle section for teachers **only**. A one-way system will take place where classes entering yard use the middle slope and classes exiting use the slope on the “Hall side”. Each class will be given a timetable for the shared toilet facilities.

As the breaks for classes are staggered, this lends itself to the staggering of teachers’ breaks. Well-being is a huge priority in St. Vincent de Paul Infant School. Break times are an important time for pupils and staff to consolidate relationships. We will continue to strive to timetable for adequate breaks in suitable spaces for all.

Personal Belongings

All pupils were asked to source their own stationery this school year (*see booklist*) to avoid the sharing of materials. **All** items must be labelled. This applies to stationery, copies, books and coats.

Pupils will **not** be permitted to bring toys from home to school. Home/school engagement with homework will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and class teachers will be direct contact regarding same as the year goes on.

Children may bring a school bag for this school year. Lunch boxes are to be kept in school bags and labelled.

First Aid

When devising a system for first aid administration, St. Vincent de Paul Infant School considered the following:

- ✓ Increase separation
- ✓ Decrease interaction

Each teacher will be provided with a first aid bum bag containing supplies. This should be on their person at all times – in the classroom, PE Hall, yard etc. Staff should wear a mask, gloves and any other PPE they wish to administer first aid.

Cleaning

To maximise effective cleaning, St. Vincent de Paul Infant School will remove unnecessary clutter. An onsite cleaner will be present during the school day to clean shared spaces, resources and commonly touched areas. All areas will be cleaned after the school day too. All toys will be cleaned on a regular basis.

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 St. Vincent de Paul will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

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.

Management have identified the LS room near the front door as the isolation area.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in St. Vincent de Paul Infant School, the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- ❖ 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 staff member caring for the child in isolation can wear personal protective equipment i.e. face mask, visor, disposable apron and gloves.
- ❖ 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. There may be changes to contact tracing throughout the year and it is asked that parents view any emails sent from the school as soon as possible, in case the information relates to same.

Staff Duties

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.

- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they live with someone who has tested positive for 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.
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and the 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 in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

Covid Related Absence Management

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

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused

considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal.