

# 2021-2022 Covid-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Operation of Cullen NS

[updated Version 4] 29 August 2021

*Scoil Náisiúnta Chuilinn Uí Chaoimh Roll No. 17171V Mullaghroe, Cullen, Mallow Co.Cork P51TK70*



## Covid-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Operation of Cullen NS updated Version 4 August 2021

### 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 Cullen N.S.

The Covid-19 Revised 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 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)*.

This revised 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 our 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**
3. **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
4. **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
5. **Control Measures**
6. **Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
7. **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
8. **Special Educational Needs**
9. **Staff Duties**
10. **Covid-19 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.

This plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from [www.Gov.ie](http://www.Gov.ie), [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie); [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie); [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie)

## 1. Cullen N.S. COVID-19 Policy

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

### **COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Cullen N.S. is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following 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(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: JA Mooney Chairperson BoM

Eileen O'Mahony Secretary to the BoM / Principal

Date: 07.09.2021

## **2. 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 Cullen NS for the new school year 2021-2022 / after prolonged closures / holidays, the Principal will check the following:

- The water system will need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaires' disease;
- School equipment, boiler room and the whole heating system has been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again and all are running smoothly.

- Bin collections and other essential services have resumed and continued right throughout the Summer holidays.

## **Signage**

The school will display signage in all areas of the building outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

## **Making Changes to School Layout**

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

The school will reconfigure classrooms and other areas as necessary to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening. All unnecessary clutter and excess furniture has been removed from Cullen NS building and campus and slim shelving has been secured permanently onto walls at the bottom and top of each of our four classrooms. The General Purpose Room has been cleared of all clutter and unnecessary furniture for extra curricular activities - Gymnastics with Sheila O'Donoghue - Gneeveguilla Athletic Club, Mairéad Mangan - Traditional Irish Dancing, Alan Finn - Tin Whistle and on wet days only GAA Football & Hurling Skills with Fachtna O'Connor.

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

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically or from the Principal. A hard copy is attached also at Appendix 1.

An RTW form should only be completed at least **3 days prior** to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

When all the school staff are back working in the building together, we will have a Croke Park session on Friday 27/8/21, specifically to deal with this Covid Revised Response Plan and measures.

## **People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):**

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at **very high risk**. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education.

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.

### **Induction Training**

We have no new staff for 2021/2022. All staff will revise and complete this Covid-19 Response Plan on our staff Croke Park day 27/8/21 along with our procedure and practices which worked highly effectively last year 2020/2021, prior to pupils returning to the school building on Monday 30/8/21. We also studied the new circular document released from the DE "COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Operation of Primary and Special Schools V4 August 2021.

This is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health;
- Covid-19 symptoms;

- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school;
- Outline of the Covid-19 Response Plan.

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the Covid-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Lead Worker Representative and the Principal, who are supported in these roles by the BoM.

### **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.

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.

The role of the lead worker representative 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(s) of Lead Worker Representative: **Catherine O'Sullivan (LWR)**

**Angela Moynihan (Deputy LWR) Orthopaedic / Theatre / Outpatients Nurse** (availing of Angela's medical expertise)

**Contact details (029) 79201 call diverted to Principal's mobile 087 7695419**

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 this Covid-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

#### **4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**

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

Emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences will be reviewed to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes will be documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement.

The school will review their existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments will also be documented and incorporated into Cullen NS's Safety Statement.

#### **Access to the School Building /Contact Log**

Access to the school building 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 will be maintained. The school will maintain a list of all pupils in their individual pods.

#### **First Aid/Emergency procedure**

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Cullen N.S..

In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999

Contact the Principal or nearest first Aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

## **5. Control Measures**

### **Know the symptoms of Covid-19**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of the corona virus (which includes the DELTA variant). Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

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

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

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

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test.

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

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

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

***Staff should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.***

### **COVID-19 Tracker App**

COVID Tracker app is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)
- keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19
- give you advice on what to do if you have symptoms

You can download the free app from Apple's AppStore or the GooglePlay store

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

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms

- All members of our school community will actively promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms.

- Signage informing members of the school community of the symptoms of Covid-19 and the need for social distancing are displayed at all access points to school grounds.
- All members of the school community will embed in pupils the need for appropriate respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene.
- Parents, pupils and staff will adhere to all procedures.

### **Attendance at School**

- Members of the school community that have symptoms **must not attend school** and should immediately phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Members of the school community **must not attend school** if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school must bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Staff and pupils must know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.
- If pupils are sick they **must not** present for school.
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point
- Visitors to the school will be restricted to Department & College Inspectors, Tusla personnel, HSE personnel, Gardaí, SENO & NEPS, plumber, electrician, carpenter - shelf fitting, cleaners, Chairperson Alan Mooney and Canon John Fitzgerald.
- Each visitor entering the school will be required to complete our Contract Tracing Log irrespective of the duration of the visit.
- Parents must not leave their vehicles when entering the school grounds when they are dropping and collecting children

The Department of Education will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Cullen N.S. will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

The Department has been working closely with the HSE and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) to develop health advice which has been tailored to the needs of schools in order to support schools in planning for reopening for Term 1 of this academic year

2021/2022. The link to the Interim Public Health recommendations for the reopening of schools:

<https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/interim-recommendations-for-the-reopening-of-schools-and-educationalfacilities.pdf>

### **Respiratory Hygiene**

- All members of our school community **must** follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or a bent elbow when coughing or sneezing. Then disposing of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- By following good respiratory hygiene, we will protect the people around us from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

### **Hand Hygiene**

All members of our school community **must** practise and actively promote effective hand hygiene at home and at school.

- Staff and pupils must understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.
- Hand sanitisers are installed, with appropriate signage, at each entry point, in each classroom and at appropriate locations throughout the school.
- Posters are displayed at each hand washing station throughout the school showing effective hand washing technique.
- HSE guidelines on handwashing are available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>
- All persons entering the school building must perform hand hygiene using hand sanitiser provided. Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

### **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils and staff must perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;
- When they cough or sneeze.

## Physical Distancing

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is one of the key control measures to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing will be usefully applied in our school allowing for some flexibility when needed. It will be applied in a practical way that recognises that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing in our school will look different across the various ages and stages of learning.

It is recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down. Staff will wear suitable face coverings while at work. Our SEN team of 3 - Angela, Michelle & Nóra - 2 SNA's & SEN Teacher will wear FFP2 Surgical Grade masks. These are stored in the Principal's Office and in our Isolation Room. All other school personnel will wear medical grade masks.

**All adult visitors to the school, as scheduled by appointment, MUST maintain a 2m distance from school staff and wear suitable face coverings.**

Our school community is committed to the two principles of physical distancing, namely, increasing separation and decreasing interaction, as a means of minimising the risk of the introduction of Covid 19 to our school.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

### ***Increasing separation***

In order to minimise contact between pupils, in so far as possible, the school will receive children in their classrooms from 9:05am (children will wait in their parents vehicles), reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing, operate a staggered evening dismissal, zoned yard spaces and staggered breaks.

### ***Decreasing interaction***

In order to reduce the risk of infection pupils and their teachers will be structured into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical.

There will be at least (1m distance) between individual Pods within the Class Bubble and between individuals in the pod, in so far as possible.

Pod sizes will be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context.

Sharing educational material between Pods will be avoided/minimised where possible.

Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble will be limited as much as possible.

### **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school**

#### ***School drop off/collection***

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting pupils to encourage physical distancing of 2m where possible are as follows:

##### **(a) Drop off:**

The children will enter the school campus in their parents vehicles via the **northern entrance gate**:

On dry, fine mornings, the children will enter the school building via the **large green gates on our southern yard (where a staff member will be on duty) and children will walk down the southern yard, entering their correct classroom (middle pupils [2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>] =top room, senior pupils [4<sup>th</sup>,5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>] = 2nd room next to hall and junior pupils up to 1<sup>st</sup> class = bottom room). On very wet and icy mornings, children (along with their family siblings only) will enter the school building via the front main entrance door and hand sanitise just inside the main, front door:**

**Teachers will be in their classrooms from 9:05am to receive pupils.**

##### **(b) Collection:**

Daily at 2pm, Angela Moynihan will escort our 10 Junior and Senior Infants up the corridor, where they will line up, socially distanced in their pods / class levels of Junior and Senior Infants, inside the main front door. As their parents arrive, only 1 child at a time, will be allowed outside the door and will be escorted out to their parent's vehicle by Angela. Michelle Twomey will do this for the 1<sup>st</sup> fortnight in September when Junior Infants will go home at 12 noon.

At 2:55pm, teachers will have their pupils ready in their classrooms to go home. The staff member on duty will call out pupils and family members when family vehicles arrive outside our large green gates. Only then, will the children leave their individual classrooms and walk out to their family vehicles under the careful supervision of the staff member on duty.

Only on very wet and windy evenings, pupils will also wait in their classrooms to be called out via the main front door to their family vehicles.

- A drop and go/collect and go policy will be in place. **Under no circumstances are parents to congregate on or outside school grounds.**
- At arrival and departure times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.
- **All adults (parents, childminders, grandparents, relations) who are dropping off/collecting pupils must wear a face covering if entering beyond the school gates onto school grounds. Pupils cannot be left outside alone near the front door /large green gates, in the mornings. You must wait with your children either in your vehicle, or if walking, wait with them, socially distanced away from other pupils and families , until the staff member on duty arrives at 9:05am.**
- Signage to encourage a distance of 2m between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff will be clearly displayed both inside and outside the school.
- When visiting coaches are in the school, GAA Coach will sanitise all equipment on the southern yard with a spray Dettol in between each of the groups.
- Visiting Dance Teacher Mairéad Mangan will teach all pupils the steps & footwork in their own socially distanced pods. Each pod will remain at least 2m apart in our well ventilated General Purpose Room with all windows on the northern & southern sides open, as well as double doors to the north & south.
- This will also apply to Alan Finn, Music Teacher. All pupils will bring their chairs, tin whistles & notes to the hall, ensuring all windows and doors are open & that all pods are as far away as possible from each other, with a minimum of 2metres apart.

## **Staff**

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.

If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed.

There is a no hand shaking policy in the school.

Gatherings of school staff will be minimised at the beginning or end of the school day.

Staff can rotate between areas/classes but this should be minimised where possible.

**Corridor:** Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.

## ***Yard/Supervision***

Play time has been adjusted as follows to minimise crowding at the entrances and exits.

- There will be a teacher and SNA on yard each day in the Junior Southern playground.
- The southern playground is to be used by the Junior Room and the Senior Room.
- The northern basketball court is to be used by 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The pitch will be used by different classes at different lunchtimes, until November when it will be deemed too wet and is out of bounds to all school personnel, until after the Spring Midterm break. The Junior Room will go on the pitch everyday at their lunchtime, while the Senior Room will use the pitch at lunchtimes on Mondays and Wednesdays and the Middle Room will use the pitch on Tuesdays and Thursday at lunchtimes.
- Children will be supervised to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.
- Sharing of equipment will be minimised and shared equipment (PE equipment - balls, SEN equipment - trampoline, yoga ball, peanut roll, space hopper, rocker, sand box with toys, giant octo play, wobble board, large and small balls) & ( Table -Top Frameworks, hexie snaps, pattern blocks, peg boards, magnet sticks, arclú mates and lego) will be sanitised by SNA's Angela & Michelle after using this equipment. Each classroom has their own set of balls.
- Pupils in the Middle & Senior Rooms & all staff, this academic year 2021/2022 will revert back to the use of hand dryers. Junior pupils up to 1<sup>st</sup> class will continue with the use of paper towels.

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

### **Face Coverings**

- Staff members will wear face coverings when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- There is no requirement for pupils to wear face coverings, they may do so , if they wish.. parents have been informed of this
- All adult visitors to school grounds **must wear** suitable face coverings.
- SEN Team of Michelle, Angela & Nóra will continue this year to wear FFP2 Surgical grade sealed 'duck masks'. All other school personnel will wear European standard for face mask / medical grade code EN 14683 masks.

**Gloves:** The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings. There is a store of gloves in the isolation room and also with the covid stock in the hall.

**Cleaning:** Arrangements for regular and daily, thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been further clarified with the 2 different cleaners. Both cleaners will sign the cleaning log, these will be collected on a monthly basis and stored in the front office.

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

All staff will have access to cleaning products (Dettol spray sanitisers and wipes/paper towels) 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 will thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

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

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.). Signage will be displayed in the staffroom so substitute teachers will be aware of this.

### **7. 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 Cullen N.S. will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

The designated **isolation area** is as follows: In the general purpose room / hall area, Toilet inside northern double glass doors ( middle of building)

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Cullen N.S. 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
- A member of staff will accompany the individual to the designated isolation area, 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
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. 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 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.
- 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, by the staff member who waits with them until their family member arrives.

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.

## **(8) Special Educational Needs**

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

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

#### ***Hand hygiene***

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

#### ***Equipment (Cullen NS, presently, has no pupils, in this category. However, I'm still including this, as it's too important to omit)***

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

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

- Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean;

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

### **Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants**

- Staff members (particularly SEN Teacher and SNAs) may rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimised as much as possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.
- In keeping with our Special Education policy, support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. At the moment, throughout the whole school, there is more withdrawal than in-class support.
- The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teacher will work as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble (class).
- Where a support teacher / SNA is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The desks and chairs in SET room will be wiped clean by the SET in between different pupils or small groups attending.

### **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:

- i. 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.
- ii. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- iii. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- iv. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.

- v. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- vi. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- vii. Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- viii. 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.
- ix. Undergo any **new, updated** Induction Training which becomes available from the Department. We have no new staff in Cullen NS this Sept.
- x. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- xi. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same

## **9. Covid-19 Related Absence Management**

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

## **10. 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.

Under the Employee Assistance Scheme - EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition, online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives

to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

This revised Covid Plan has been discussed, edited, revised, reviewed and redrafted by all staff of Cullen NS during our Croke Park Day 27/8/21 and was also discussed with the Cleaning staff by the Principal during our Summer holidays, prior to the Cleaning for the Reopening of Cullen NS.

This plan will be presented to the Board of Management for Ratification at our 1<sup>st</sup> BoM Meeting of the academic year 2021/2022 on Tuesday 7/9/21.

Signed: Catherine O'Sullivan *Catherine O'Sullivan* Deputy Principal / LWR / BoM Staff Nominee

JA Mooney *JA Mooney* Chairperson BoM

Eileen O'Mahony *Eibhlín Iníon Uí Mhathúna* Secretary to the BoM / Principal Date: 07.09.2021

## **Appendix 1** Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

**Return to Work Form - This Return to Work Form must be completed by school staff in advance of returning to the workplace. If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to the workplace.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

|    | Questions  | YES | NO |
|----|--|-----|----|
| 1. | Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature (38 degrees C or above), difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days? |     |    |
| 2. | Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?  |     |    |
| 3. | Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?   |     |    |
| 4. | In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?  |     |    |
| 5. | Have you been advised to self-isolate at this time?  |     |    |
| 6. | Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time?   |     |    |
| 7. | Have you been categorised as 'Very High Risk' or 'High Risk' by the Occupational Health Service (OHS)  |     |    |

Please provide details below of any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the above, which may need to be considered to allow your safe return to work e.g. returning from travel abroad.

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

\* If your situation changes after you complete and submit this Return to Work Form, please inform your employer.

\*\* Further information on people at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) or high risk from COVID-19 can be found at link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>.

\*\*\* Details of current arrangements for travel overseas can be found set out at [this gov.ie link](https://www.gov.ie/en/publications/2020-12-17-arrangements-for-travel-overseas/)

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.