



21<sup>st</sup> August, 2020

**Re: Covid19 Plan.**

Please read our Covid-19 plan as it pertains to school reopening of St. Lachteen's and general organisation. We look forward to welcoming all the children back to school.

**Underlying Principles**

- The school has a responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being 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.
- In keeping with the current 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.

**Prerequisites**

- All children return to school and each classroom will operate within their own bubble system.
- All class layouts have been designed to facilitate physical distancing in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points to the school, to teaching areas and other locations within the school.
- Children will also be required to have their own personal hand sanitizer from Rang 1 to Rang 6.
- Each classroom will be allocated their own toilet facilities.
- **Children will come to school with their hands washed.** Sanitisation/ Hand washing will occur on entry to the school, prior to eating, after each yard break and before the children go home.

## Arrival at school

- As per usual arrangements the school gates will open at 8.55am. No children will be permitted to be on the grounds prior to this time.
- As children start to arrive on the school premise's, they will be escorted in groups of approximately 10 by a staff member to their classrooms. On entry, children will sanitise their hands using a hand sanitising station.
- The exception will be for Rang 6 who will make their way independently to their classroom, their class teacher, will meet them on day 1 so they become familiar with the procedure. Children in Rang 6 will also sanitise their hands on entry to the building.
- Children are to enter through the side gate nearest the Community Centre (bar children travelling on the school buses)
- For certain children, alternative arrangements are in place as discussed with the Principal.
- Bus children will be entering via the entrance gates at the front of the school and will be collected by staff members at 9.10 for school entry.
- School will commence at 9.10 at which point the school will be closed and no admittance after this time.
- Unfortunately, parents or guardians cannot enter the school campus without prior approval from the school principal. We would ask that you would strictly adhere to this policy.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by emailing the school office ( [oifig@lachteen.ie](mailto:oifig@lachteen.ie) )

## End of School Day

Adults, who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should wait in a socially distanced manner.

- The following locations will be in operation for the Junior and Senior Infant Classes

**Junior Infants 1. 50:** Parents can wait in the lower school yard. Children will be exiting the building via the exit near the school staff room.

**Senior Infants 1.50:** Parents can wait in the upper school yard (please do not wait by the fence as this will be a high traffic area for pupils and parents exiting).

Children will be exiting the school via the school shelter area

- When the school day for other classes is over, the following arrangements will apply:-  
To minimise a large congregation at the side exit, please note the following
  - **2. 45** - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class -- A staff member will bring the children to their designated exit point which will be the side gate.
  - **2.50** - 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class -- A staff member will allow each pod to leave the classroom separately in order to minimise contact, these pupils will also exit from the side gate
  - Pupils travelling home on the bus will be collected by a staff member and will exit near the bus area.

### **Collection of Children during the School Day**

Other than if a child has to be collected due to illness, if an adult has to collect or drop a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply and will be strictly adhered to e.g. for appointments

- Children can only be dropped/collected at two designated times during the day – 11.00am and 1.00pm
- An email needs to be sent to the school office, at a minimum the previous day, indicating the reason for collection/drop off, who will be collecting/dropping off the pupil(s) as well as the time i.e. 11.00am or 1.00pm (email please to oifig@lachteen.ie)
- When the adult arrives at the school, they will have to wait outside the school door (near secretary's office), there will be no need to enter the school to sign in/out as the school will have the email request received. Adults waiting at these time periods should adhere to social distancing rules.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff.
- No adult will be entering the school, unless they have prior permission from the school principal.

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

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

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by phone.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home.
- If medical advice is required or if the child's condition worsens while in the school, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is displaying symptoms of Covid-19.
- Arrangements will be made 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.

### **Children who should not attend school**

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

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

### **Online learning**

We will continue to engage with online learning platforms e.g. Seesaw. This will involve one online activity a week in order to keep children familiar with online learning. All children must engage in this activity. Other online learning platforms may also be explored.

### **Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education teacher) will share suggested work to support the child's learning at home with parents.

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

If your child has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 we ask that you please inform the school. When the school is notified that a pupil or staff member has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- The parents of all children will be notified.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

### **Personal Equipment**

- It is requested that all children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc. as per class stationery list to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment. These will be left in school for school use only.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification, to include pencil cases.
- Please ensure that children do not have jewellery / wristbands/ rings/ watches etc on their hands to facilitate proper hand washing/ sanitisation.
- In general coats will be hung individually at the back of children's seats, unless space allows for coat rails/hooks to be utilised, this is to avoid proximity of coats and the spread of germs due to contact.

## Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

## Yards

Each classroom bubble will have access to a designated area of the school yard during their allocated break times. The classroom bubbles will be divided into two groups, both groups getting two 2 x 20 minute breaks each day. This is provisional and may be adjusted throughout the term.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Classes</u>	<u>Staff</u>
1	<u>Break one:</u> 10:40–11:00 <u>Break two:</u> 12:30-12:50	Junior Infants to Rang 2 inclusive	Teacher and relevant SNAs
2	<u>Break one:</u> 11:10-11:30 <u>Break two:</u> 1:00-1:20	Rang 3 to Rang 6 inclusive	Teacher and Relevant SNAs

## Special Education

In keeping with our Special Education policy, support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of their defined bubbles insofar as possible.

- Where a Special Education teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class receive support in one of the Special Education rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in Special Education rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

## PPE

The school will follow advice from the Department in terms of PPE, staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face mask.

It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

**Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, a member of the Special Education team or Principal release days may be utilised. If several teachers are absent, difficulties may arise since it is not appropriate for the classroom bubble to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classrooms. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

**Cleaning**

We believe the cleanliness of our school to be extremely important and we have always operated to the very best standards in this regard. The Board will increase the cleaning capacity and ensure that the school rigidly adheres to the cleaning guidelines as laid down in the Return to School guidelines issued by the Department of Education.

**PE**

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors with limited use of equipment.

**Extra-curricular Activities**

For the moment and until it is safe to do so, extra-curricular activities will not be offered.

**Communication with Parents**

Email will be the primary mode of communication with parents, if your email address changes, please inform the school by email.

Face to face meetings may no longer be possible so alternative means such as telephone or zoom will be available.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Board of Management.