



# COVID-19 POLICY

**St. John's Primary School**

## Contents

1. Rationale
2. Legislation and Guidance
3. Aims
4. Social Distancing
5. Enhanced hygiene measures
6. Ventilation
7. Use of PPE
8. Face Coverings
9. School Transport
10. Attendance
11. Identification and Response to Symptoms/Close Contacts

There are various risk assessments in place to supporting the implementation of this policy.



### 1. Rationale

This policy outlines what practical steps we will take to keep our school community safe from the transmission of COVID-19.

### 2. Legislation and Guidance

In writing this policy we have adhered to the following guidance:

- PHA – Information for Parents and Carers – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- Letter from the Permanent Secretary – Mark Browne – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021
- DE - 'Northern Ireland – COVID-19: Guidance for Schools and Educational Settings in NI (August 2021)
- DE Circular 2021/16 - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools – 14/8/20
- <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-self-isolating>

### 3. Aims

- To clarify the practical approaches and increased hygiene measures the school has adopted to maximise the safety of the staff, pupils, their families and visitors to the school from the transmission of COVID-19.
- To outline the procedures if a member of staff or pupil tests positive for COVID-19.
- To outline guidance on school transport and school attendance in relation to COVID-19.

### Practical approaches and increased hygiene measures to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19

#### 4. Social Distancing

In St. John's social distancing remains a key aspect of measures to be taken to mitigate the risks of virus transmission.

Our aim for social distancing falls into two categories:

1. to increase separation.
2. to decrease interaction.

We will continue to endeavour to implement as much social distancing *as is practical where physical capacity and curriculum delivery permit*. Social distancing guidance applies across all areas of the school estate, both indoors and outdoors.

We will also continue to operate local approaches that minimise interaction between pupils at social and dining times.

The use of formal bubbles is no longer required in schools. However, to support effective contact tracing, we will maintain a cautious and measured approach that still seeks to maximise the time where pupils are within a consistent group of pupils. Therefore, we will

endeavour to maintain class/partial class bubbles as much as possible. As lower levels of risk are associated with outdoor activities we can relax the use of bubbles if necessary.

Use of signage will be used in areas of the school to remind everyone of social distancing measures.

We will try to ensure that the children do not congregate in areas such as the toilets and corridors for long periods.

**Larger gatherings/ assemblies**

Mitigating measures will be in place such as maintaining social distancing between class groups, as well as, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices. It is also important that the school hall is well ventilated at all times, by leaving the doors and windows open. Frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, will be cleaned after the assembly. Pupils should be encouraged to stay with their class group wherever possible during the gathering.

**Morning Club and After Schools**

It is accepted that pupils who are accessing these clubs will inevitably be mixing with those from outside their usual classes. We will ensure that mitigation measures are in place to support effective contact tracing for such activities. DE also advise that wraparound care services are delivered outdoors wherever possible.

**Adults providing one to one care for SEN or vulnerable pupils**

Adult to adult social distancing will be maintained at all times. However, where staff consistently remain with a pupil or a class they should be viewed as part of the protective bubble and social distancing between those adults and children can be relaxed. Any staff who wish to avail of face coverings are free to do so.

**Arrival and collection arrangements to support social distancing**

St. John's employs the use of the church car park for the arrival and collection of children. As this is a vast space there is plenty of room to avoid the children and parents congregating. A member of staff will be present at the school gate in the morning and evening to remind children of the procedures and where they have to go.

We request that all children arrive and depart the school premises via the back entrance. A drop off area for the morning times will be outlined at the back gate and cones will be placed for the children who are walking and cycling so they can move safely to and from the Church walkway. Once the children have arrived at school they should make their way to their classroom where they will be supervised by an adult and will begin their day by handwashing. **The school gates will be opened from 8.50a.m.**

**Children who use the morning club or arrive to school by bus can access the school from 8.15am via the front door only and will make their way directly to the school hall.**

At these times we encourage that adults follow the PHA guidance with respect to social distancing and avoid gathering in groups at the school gates. At both arrival and collection times we actively encourage parents from entering the school building as a means of preventing the spread of the virus. Where parents must enter the building we expect them to use the appropriate hygiene measures.

### **Break and lunch times**

To support social distancing, we aim to minimise physical interactions between individual and year groups at social and dining times. Each class/es will have designated play areas.

### **Designated Play Areas:**

Playground 1 – outside staffroom

Playground 2 – outside P3 mobile

Playground 3 – church carpark

### **Break time Designated Areas**

P1, P2, P3 & P4	10.30am -10.45am	P1 – Playground 1 P2 – Playground 1 P3 – Playground 2 P4 – Playground 2
P5, P6 & P7	10.30am – 10.45am	Playground 3

Reducing pupil circulation at lunch time will minimise contact with frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and thus help reduce the transmission of the virus. Lunch times will be staggered as follows and a one-way system will be in place.

P1, P2, P3 & P4	Eat Lunch Play	12.30pm – 12.55pm 1.00pm – 1.20pm
P5, P6 & P7	Eat Lunch Play	1.00pm -1.20pm 12.30pm -12.55pm
Playgrounds 1 & 2		

### **Circulation of the children throughout the school day**

To minimise circulation in the main building some pupils will access toilets from the outside doors. We will also maintain a one-way system for movement up and down the school corridor and this will be marked by arrows on the floor.

The P2and P5 children will use the external circulation to access the toilets and dining hall.

In the event of an emergency, evacuation points will remain as normal.

Within the classroom the seats will be spaced as widely as possible and all children will be assigned their own individual desk. The use of the outdoor space will be maximised to limit transmission and to support appropriate social distancing between children and staff.

## **5. Enhanced hygiene measures**

### **Personal Hygiene**

We actively encourage all staff, children and visitors to the school to maintain personal hygiene throughout the day.

- The children are expected to wash/sanitise their hands thoroughly on arrival to school and this will be a repeatable discipline throughout the school day. We encourage the children to bring individual hand sanitiser and tissues to school to support the implementation of good hand and respiratory hygiene. Soap, disposable paper towels, sanitiser and tissues will also be available in every classroom.
- Hand sanitisers are also available at the entry and exit points of the school.
- We understand that sanitiser is not a substitution for hand washing and that our younger children will require supervision.
- Signage is displayed throughout the school to build awareness around personal hygiene throughout the school day and regular reminders will be provided to the children.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned regularly. Staff are encouraged to use the same workstation consistently rather than sharing where possible. Each workstation should be wiped down before the next person uses it.
- Staff can choose to use their own cup and cutlery. All staff room crockery and cutlery will be washed in a dish washer. Staff emptying the dishwasher will wear gloves.
- There will be an extension of the cleaning regime with desk surfaces, chairs, doors, light switches banisters, sinks and toilets being cleaned more regularly.
- Clear signage regarding the washing of hands after using the toilet will be displayed and hand dryer/paper towels will be available.

**It should be noted that normal cleaning activity should be sufficient and that hand hygiene is the most effective method of combatting the spread of the virus. Any cleaning measures will only support reducing the risk of transmission where hand hygiene and hand washing are adhered to.**

### **Respiratory Hygiene**

- Staff and children should cover the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping and blowing the nose.
- All used tissues should be disposed of promptly into a waste bin, and schools should ensure that bins are emptied regularly.
- If you don't have any tissues available, cough and sneeze into the crook of the elbow and wash hands at the first opportunity.

- Bins with bags should be provided in classrooms and in other key locations around the site for the disposal of tissues and any other waste.
- A supply of disposable tissues should be available to implement the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach in each classroom

Following the guidance, we acknowledge that enhanced and terminal cleaning are only recommended during an outbreak of COVID-19. If an outbreak of COVID-19 occurs the EA cleaning service will be notified. After three days of isolation an enhanced clean of the isolated location will be conducted. The normal cleaning regime then resumes after.

## **6. Ventilation**

In St. John's we encourage the opening of doors and windows to increase natural ventilation (where it is safe to do so) and also to reduce contact with door handles. The EA has provided CO2 monitors to the school.

A ventilated space will be available for children and staff who become symptomatic to wait until they can be collected or safely get home.

## **7. Use of PPE**

PPE means

- Fluid resistant surgical masks
- Disposable gloves
- disposable plastic aprons
- Eye protection (goggles or visor)

**When it is used it is essential that it is used properly.** Staff will only wear PPE when it is appropriate to the task they are undertaking. PPE is only required in a very small number of cases:

- For intimate care needs
- Giving children medication
- If a child or adult is displaying COVID-19 symptoms
- If the 2m rule for social distancing cannot be maintained in certain teaching situations.

PPE will be available in each classroom, in the disabled toilet and in the reprographics room.

## 8. Face Coverings

Face coverings are not generally recommended for routine use in class. Staff and pupils may wish to use them during the routine day and this is acceptable.

All visitors to the school must wear face masks.

Face coverings are strongly encouraged for activities that entail large numbers of staff or pupils within an enclosed space where social distancing is not possible.

We strongly recommend that children regardless of their age should wear a face covering on school buses or taxis.

## 9. School Transport

Children showing any symptoms of COVID-19 should not travel to school.

Home to school transport should only be used where there is no alternative available. Therefore, we encourage active travel such as walking or cycling to school or the use of private transport.

For those children who have no alternative but to use home to school transport, we strongly recommend that children regardless of their age should wear a face covering on school buses or taxis.

## 10. Attendance

Specific guidance in respect of recording pupil attendance whether at school or at home is set out in ***DE Circular 2021/16 - Attendance guidance and absence recording by schools and associated addendum.***

Decisions regarding the recording of pupil attendance will be down to schools and the individual circumstances of each child. If evidence cannot be provided in terms of either the specific medical condition or that learning is being completed then school should record attendance as an unauthorised absence (Codes { or }, or D, H or N) where appropriate.

Registration of pupils working from home would happen once a day (rather than twice a day) for example provided that work was being completed as required. We appreciate that for some schools, this may be very challenging therefore schools may have to rely on a combination of their professional judgement and pupil's work on whether or not pupils have engaged with learning at home.

If a pupil is asymptomatic with COVID-19, as per DE Circular 2021/16, their attendance will be recorded as Code “(“which is an authorised absence. In this situation, parents should talk directly to the school about provision of education materials. Schools will wish to support pupils as much as possible to complete school work if they are well, however, clearly in these circumstances teachers will be continuing to teach all classes during the school day so expectations must be realistic. (refer to Home Learning Policy)



## **11. Identification and Response to Symptoms/Close Contacts**

*Refer to PHA Guidance 'Information for Parents/Carers' (6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022) below.*

If pupils or staff develop symptoms associated with COVID-19 they should follow the PHA's health advice on self-isolation and testing. (Jan 2022)

### **Positive Cases and Isolation**

- **For fully vaccinated positive cases**, the self-isolation period is cut from 10 days to seven subject to providing negative lateral flow results on both days 6 and 7 with tests taken 24 hours apart.
- **Unvaccinated positive cases** must still isolate for 10 days.

**The PHA will continue to manage close contacts identification.**

### **Close Contacts**

Guidance was changed in 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 around self-isolation for contacts of positive cases.

- Fully vaccinated close contacts or school aged contacts of a positive case will no longer be required to take a PCR test. They are instead advised to take a lateral flow test as soon as possible and continue daily lateral flows until the tenth day after the last date of contact with the positive case.
- **Unvaccinated positive cases** must still isolate for 10 days.

### **Asymptomatic Testing**

Lateral flow tests are available for all staff and should be completed twice a week (Sundays and Wednesdays) if they sign up to use them. A positive result obtained using a lateral flow does not need confirmed with a PCR test. If a lateral flow test is positive, then self-isolation should commence immediately. A return to school can take place when the appropriate guidelines have been followed.

Where an individual has had a negative result, it is important to still apply caution.

# Information for parents and carers



Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19. Please don't send your child to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- loss of or change to their sense of taste or smell

If your child does not have symptoms of COVID-19 but has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and they or members of your household do not need to self-isolate. Your child can attend school if fit to do so.

Contact tracing and self-isolation procedures have recently changed, so here's what to do in particular cases.

Contact tracing will be done by the Contact Tracing Service at the Public Health Agency (PHA). They will call from the number **028 9536 8888** – save the number in your phone so that you recognise it and please answer if they call.

## My child has COVID-19 symptoms

- Book your child a PCR test as soon as possible.
- They should isolate until they get their result. If it is negative they can carry on as normal and return to school as long as they are well (no fever for 48 hours).
- If it is positive they should isolate for 10 days but may be able to end isolation after 7 days if they have a negative lateral flow result on day six and day seven. You will receive further information by text message and a contact tracing call from the PHA.
- You should advise your child's school or nursery that they have tested positive.

You can book a PCR test online via [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by calling **119** if you can't go online.

## Someone in our household is positive.

- Adults in your household who are not fully vaccinated must self-isolate for 10 days. If they develop symptoms at any time they should book a PCR test.
- School aged children and fully vaccinated adults should take an LFD test as soon as possible and self-isolate until they get the result. They can stop isolating if their test is negative. They should take an LFD test daily until 10 days after exposure, ideally before leaving home for the first time that day. At any point, if an LFD test is positive, they should self-isolate for 10 days from that test. If they develop symptoms, they should self-isolate and book a PCR test.
- Children under the age of 5 do not need to self-isolate or be tested unless they develop symptoms.



### There has been a positive case in my child's school

- The Contact Tracing Service will be in touch with you if your child has been identified as a close contact of a positive case.
- If the only contact has been in school it is unlikely that your child will be identified as a close contact.
- The school may send a general letter to parents advising them to be aware of symptoms.
- In the meantime if your child develops symptoms please book a PCR test.

### There has been a positive case in my child's nursery school

- The PHA will work with the nursery to identify all close contacts and provide advice and guidance to parents on what to do next.
- In the meantime if your child develops symptoms please book a PCR test.

### There has been a positive case in my childcare setting

- The PHA will work with your childcare provider to identify all close contacts and provide advice and guidance on what to do next.
- In the meantime if your child develops symptoms please book a PCR test.

### There has been a positive case in a club my child attends

- The Contact Tracing Service will be in touch with you if your child has been identified as a close contact of a positive case.
- In the meantime if your child develops symptoms please book a PCR test.

**For more information visit:**

[pha.site/contacttracingschoolsFAQs](https://pha.site/contacttracingschoolsFAQs)



**Non-Compliance with Contact Tracing Service**

There may be some staff members and/or pupils, who do not comply with the public health guidance on COVID-19, including, choosing not to follow the advice to get tested or self-isolate. Equally, some SEN pupils may be physically unable to take a COVID-19 test.

Where it is clear to a Principal that such an individual has been:

- in a location that requires 10 days quarantine on return or,
- a close contact of a confirmed case; or,
- displaying clear COVID-19 symptoms;

In line with their general duty of care for all pupils and staff, the Principal should inform them that they cannot attend the school until the PHA processes for self-isolation have been completed and remind pupils and parents of the pupil behaviour and the parental support required in line with the introduction section of this guidance. Where such an individual attends school, they should be quarantined in line with the above guidance on protective isolation and be sent home from the school.

Where an individual is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 but will not or cannot have a test, the Principal should discuss the situation with the PHA education team for further advice.

**Policy drafted and agreed by staff on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**Reviewed April 2021**

**Reviewed August 2021**

**Reviewed January 2022**