

## **Scoil Náisiúnta Baile an Phiarsaigh**

### **Piercestown National School**

**Drinagh, Co. Wexford**

**Roll No. 18558E**



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**Logistics Plan Reopening of School August 2020**

**and updated in February/March 2021 for Phased Reopening**

#### **Our School Profile**

**For the year 2020-2021 we have:**

- 201 pupils
- 8 Mainstream classes
- 1 ASD class
- 3 Special Education Teachers (one shared with another school)
- Administrative Principal
- 4 Full Time SNA posts
- 3 Part Time SNA posts - one 0.83 SNA post and two 0.5 SNA posts
- 2 School buses, one with bus escort to accompany children
- Full Time Secretary
- Part Time Caretaker
- Contract Cleaning company
- Sunny Days Breakfast and Homework Club - Private onsite child-minding facilities \*Note the operation of Sunny Days is external to the running of the school. Sunny Days has its own COVID-19 response plan and measures in place. The BOM is not responsible for the running of Sunny Days but has liaised with Sunny Days staff and upgraded facilities to ensure Sunny Days can operate in line with public health guidelines and their specific procedures - August 2020\*
- \*Sunny Days reopened on 1<sup>st</sup> March for essential workers following liaison with BOM prior to reopening – February 2021
- \*Olga Conway – Discovery Drama (Wednesday afternoons) plans to reopen under approved guidelines in the coming weeks. Similarly, while the BOM is not responsible for the running of Discovery Drama we have liaised with Olga Conway and upgraded facilities to ensure Discovery Drama can operate in line with public health guidelines and their specific procedures – August 2020\*
- \*Olga Conway – Discovering Drama is not currently running in Piercestown N.S. due to Level 5 restrictions – February/March 2021

#### **School Hours 2020-2021 \*\*no change**

We are delighted to announce that due to significant works carried out in the last 12 months and **over the Summer 2020**, we can accommodate the **SAME opening and closing hours**, without requiring staggered drop off and collection times.

- 9.20am – 2.00pm Junior and Senior infants
- 9.20am – 3.00pm 1<sup>st</sup> class to 6th class

**N.B.** Please note Junior infants will finish at 12:00pm for the first two weeks (up to and including Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September).

### **Additional works to school building/premises**

#### **Exit and Entry Points:**

As a result of fire safety works that took place in Easter 2019, our school now has additional entrance and exit points that will facilitate **ALL** of our pupils arriving at the **SAME TIME** each day. This negates the necessity to stagger drop offs and collections. The Board has decided to utilise all of these to our advantage for keeping class bubbles separate and reducing the amount of traffic throughout what was the main entrance/exit point.

#### **Toilet Facilities:**

Our toilet facilities were also upgraded as part of a Summer Works Scheme in recent years. We are now in the fortunate position of having toilets in all classes from ASD class and infants to 4<sup>th</sup> class.

There are two toilet blocks shared between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class. There are two cubicles and two sinks in each bathroom, the girls and boys.

Additional measures have been put in place to increase separation and minimise interaction between the classes as follows:

- Signage has been installed designating one toilet/cubicle and one sink for 5<sup>th</sup> class girls and one for 6<sup>th</sup> class girls, with the same arrangement in the boys' toilets.
- On the chance, that one pupil from 5<sup>th</sup> and one from 6<sup>th</sup> may enter at the same time, a partition has been installed between the sinks to ensure social distancing.
- An extra soap dispenser for each sink has been installed.

#### **Staff Car Park:**

The decision was made to extend the school staff car park, allowing more room for safe access to the entrance point for our Junior infant children (see Arrival at School detailed below).

#### **Corridor:**

The carpet on the main and side corridors of the school has been replaced with marmoleum to facilitate cleaning and disinfecting. This will also allow for signage and floor stickers as required.

#### **Signage and hand sanitiser dispensers:**

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed at key areas throughout the school, e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom, etc. Signage has been put in place also to promote physical distancing, good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

#### **Isolation area:**

An Isolation area has been created in the area beside the PE hall, with its own exit point. This area is equipped with PPE and a bin for safe disposal of tissues/PPE etc. It allows a distance of 2 metres to be maintained while in use, with stickers clearly marking the appropriate positions of the chairs.

If children / staff in school present with symptoms or become ill, they will be brought to the isolation area and parents of children will be contacted immediately. This is in accordance with our Piercestown N.S. Covid-19 Response plan.

### Our Biggest Change

The safety of all members of our school community is paramount. Unfortunately, under current public health advice, it is necessary to **restrict access** to the school building to pupils and staff only. Therefore, **it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds before/after school.** *(see our arrival and collection procedures for our one exception to this)* As we have always had an open door policy in Piercestown N.S. this is a huge change to our whole 'being' as a school.

Therefore, we would like to reassure you that your children's wellbeing and happiness continues to be our first priority. If your child is upset, a staff member will be on hand to reassure them and a follow-on phone call to reassure a parent will be made. We understand that these are anxious times. Our welcoming ethos will still be very much alive, we just have to visualise it differently.

### Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for children and where teachers feel able to engage with pupils in a way that supports their learning.

#### **Physical distancing:**

Classrooms and other spaces within the school have been reconfigured to increase separation to the greatest degree possible and limit interaction within classrooms.

A system of class bubbles and pods can be used to decrease interaction in order to limit contact between class groups and also to limit the sharing of common facilities.

#### **Class Bubbles:**

The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A class bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

#### **Pods:**

Within class bubbles, children may be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 4 - 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in their class bubble, or classroom. Pods may also be used for other activities such as PE. Pods will be assigned following careful consideration and communication between last years' teacher and the current class teacher. Other factors such as educational, social, emotional and well-being implications will be also be taken into consideration.

#### **Physical distancing requirements - Junior infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class:**

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class to maintain a physical distance within their class bubble. (see DES COVID-19 Response plan section 5.4)

#### **Physical distancing requirements - 3<sup>rd</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class:**

Children from 3<sup>rd</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class may be arranged in pods within their class bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per pod. As far as possible, each pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the

next pod. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible. (see DES COVID-19 Response plan section 5.4)

**\*In our school all of our classes from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class are arranged into pods**

#### **New arrival/collection procedures:**

To help to maintain social distancing and minimise risk, new procedures will be put in place for arrival/collection and a full plan for the entry and exit of our children in all classes has been formalised.

We would ask for your patience as we all get used to this new system and your co-operation to allow the smooth operation of these new procedures.

#### **Arrival at school:**

- The yard will be fully supervised from 9:10 am as usual. **We ask that no child is left at the school before this time.** However, parents are asked to drop their children to the appropriate school gate (detailed below) **as close to 9:20am as possible**, keeping two metres away from staff and other parents as much as possible and **wearing masks**. (The one exception is Junior Infants parents who will escort their children to their classroom door for safety reasons)
- There will be a supervisor at the front of the school where the senior classes will line up and also one at the back of the school where the junior classes will line up.
- If children need to be left early, parents have the option of contacting Sunny Days Breakfast Club (Debbie Devereux 089 – 2277151) who may be able to facilitate child minding. **\*This is at present only available to essential workers as per government guidelines – March 2021**
- To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk/cycle/scoot to school if it is at all possible.
- The school yard has now been line marked to keep class bubbles apart and allow children to maintain physical distance when lining up. **Red dots, on which the children stand, mark a metre apart distance to ensure social distance maintained when lining up after the bell rings.**
- Please remind/talk to your child about staying within their own bubble at all times i.e. their class and going directly to their bubbles zone in the morning.
- There will be signage and arrows telling children which gate to use and directing them where to go to get to their school entrance.

*\*\*\*A video was made available on the school website and emailed to all parents before our reopening in September, explaining to all parents our new entrance and exit procedures.*

#### **\*\*NEW system for the safe entrance of our children into our school premises:**

- **Junior infants** will be escorted by their parents through the small gate to the right of the school building (near staff car park entrance), around the right side of the school building (path beside staff car park) to the yard with the play panels at the back of the school, outside their class room. Children will wait in their zone until the bell rings at 9.20am and then enter the school using the door which leads directly into their classroom. **Parents entering the school grounds are required to wear a mask and maintain a distance of 2m from each other and all staff members at all times. Parents/Guardians unfortunately, are not permitted entry into the classroom.**

- **Senior infants, 1<sup>st</sup> class and 2<sup>nd</sup> class** will access the school yard through the main gate and go directly around the left side of the building (past the mural) to the back of the school. They will line up outside their own classroom and wait in their designated zone for their class bubble until the bell rings and enter the school building using the door which leads directly into each of their classrooms. **\*\*For the first two days, Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> and Fri 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020, parents/guardians of Senior infants ARE permitted onto the grounds to walk their children around. We understand that Senior infants, given the extended school closure since March 12<sup>th</sup>, may be anxious. \*\***
- **3<sup>rd</sup> class and 4<sup>th</sup> class** will also access the school yard through the main gate. They will remain in the front yard in their class bubbles, with each class lining up when the bell rings in their own area (clearly marked) and keeping their distance from each other. They will enter the school building through the main entrance (beside the office) and go directly to their classrooms. This entry will be directed by their teachers to ensure ONLY one class enters at a time.
- **5<sup>th</sup> class and 6<sup>th</sup> class** will access the school yard through the small gate to the right of the school building (same as Junior infants and their parents). They will remain in the front yard in their class bubbles, with each class lining up when the bell rings in their own area (clearly marked) and keeping their distance from each other. They will enter the building through the door to the right of the building (with the yellow pole) which can only be opened from the inside and will go directly into their classrooms. This entry will be directed by their teachers to ensure ONLY one class enters at a time.
- **Ms. Sinnott's class** will be escorted directly from their bus and/or upon arrival to their classroom by a member of our SNA team. Parents can enter the grounds to ensure a safe handover to the SNA. There is a designated yellow route straight to the door. Parents/Guardians are NOT permitted to enter the building due to new COVID restrictions. This is in keeping with how July Provision was also run in 2020.
- **Upon entry to the school, ALL children will be supervised sanitising their hands.**

**N.B.** \*\*\*\*Rainy Days

A supervisor will direct children immediately into their class bubble zone and then into their classroom. **This cannot happen any earlier than 9.10am.** In these exceptional circumstances, staff will supervise from 9.10am where children have been allowed inside. Again, we would ask parents, especially on rainy days to drop their children to school as close to the starting time as possible.

**End of school day:**

- All classes will exit the school building **by the same door** through which they entered and also **exit the yard by the same gate through which they entered.**
- Class teachers (with the exception of Junior and Senior infants) will escort their children around to the front of the school where they will either exit through their designated gate or wait in their designated zone for their bubble to be collected.
- Parents are asked to collect all children from the school gate, keeping 2 metres away from staff and other parents as much as is possible. **Parents are reminded to wear masks during this collection.**
- Supervision will be provided by the yard supervisor until 3.10p.m.
- **If the area around the gate is busy please wait your turn. When you have collected your child please leave promptly.**
- **Parents are asked to heed messaging sent out prior to and after reopening 1<sup>st</sup> March strongly urging them not to congregate outside school gate/wall.**
- As many of our older children walk home by themselves, there should not be as many cars arriving for pickups at this time.
- Parents who drive to school are asked to remain in their cars until pick up time.

- Parents who walk to the school to collect children are asked to maintain a social distance of **2m or more** outside the school gate/wall.
- Special arrangements were put in place for Junior infants for the first two weeks of the school year, allowing them to be collected at 12p.m. – August/September 2020

**\*\*NEW system for the safe exit of our children from our school premises:**

- **Junior infants (from 14<sup>th</sup> September onwards)** – 2.00pm Parents will collect their children from their classroom door. Parents are reminded to keep their social distance from each other **and required to wear masks.**
- **Senior infants** – 2.00pm Parents will collect their children from their classroom door at the back of the school. **Parents are permitted to enter the ground for this essential collection.** Parents are reminded to keep their social distance from each other **and required to wear masks.**
- **1<sup>st</sup> class and 2<sup>nd</sup> class** – 3.00pm Class teachers will bring the children to the relevant school gate/ or their designated zone. As 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class have their zone at the back of the school, an end of day zone for 1<sup>st</sup> class is opposite the front mural at the wall. The 2<sup>nd</sup> class zone will be beside the front mural.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> class, 4<sup>th</sup> class, 5<sup>th</sup> class and 6<sup>th</sup> class** - 3.00p.m. Class teachers will bring the children to the relevant school gate.
- **Ms. Sinnott's class** will be escorted directly to their bus and/or to their exit door i.e. the front door of the school by the teacher/SNA. Parents can be on the grounds (socially distanced) to receive their child.

**N.B. \*\*\*This system will apply rain, hail or shine so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather!**

**Break times:**

New safety protocols and procedures have been put in place regarding break times and the use of the yard. We are very fortunate to have a lot of outdoor space in which the children can play safely. The new arrangements for break times are as follows:

- Break times will be staggered to minimise the amount of children using the yard at any one time, allowing for physical distancing and limited interaction.
- Junior classes will take their first break from 11:00 to 11:15 and their lunch break from 12:30 to 1:00.
- Senior classes will take their first break from 11:15 to 11:30 and their lunch break from 1:00 to 1:30.
- There yard will be divided into different zones for each class bubble.
- Each class will remain in their own area and play only with the children in their own class bubble.
- Zones will be rotated amongst the different classes to allow the children to opportunity to play in each of the various different play areas.
- The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

**Yard Supervision:**

In order to limit contact between staff members and also between staff and children, the supervision rota has been organised based on class bubbles and the relevant SET teachers who work with each class.

Class teachers from Junior infants, Senior infants, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes and their SET teachers will have their breaks and their break time supervision at the same time as each other. Similarly, class teachers from 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes will have their breaks and their break time supervision together.

**Lunches:**

Parents are asked to make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Children will eat their lunches at their tables, as per our usual practice. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

**They will be asked to sanitise their hands before and after eating, please encourage compliance with this.**

**Prepared for the weather:**

It is important for the children's overall wellbeing that we maximise the amount of time which can be spent outdoors, both at break times and throughout the day for outdoor activities such as PE. Please ensure that your child is dressed for the weather each day - coats, hats, scarves, gloves, etc. The more time they can spend outdoors the greater the benefit in terms of their physical and mental health.

**Classrooms may feel colder than before due to new ventilation guidelines (see below) so parents are advised to dress their children warmly with layers that can be put on/taken off to make them more comfortable.**

**Rainy days:**

On wet days children will remain inside in their classrooms, seated in their pods. They will be supervised as normal and rainy day activities will be offered to them.

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

Staff members, particularly Special Education Teachers (SET) and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimised where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning 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 as far as possible, within the confines of a class bubble.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers will be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another. **Both teachers will also wear masks.**
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending. **Seating for children in SET rooms are 1m apart**, individual tables and protective screens in use in the smaller SET room.

**General Purpose (GP) Room – cleaned and disinfected with fogger:**

The GP Room will be used by Sunny Days each morning to facilitate their Breakfast Club. After the children have been dismissed, Sunny Days will fully sanitise this room with a fogging machine. This ensures the space will be safe for use by the school throughout the day.

**Assembly:**

As it presently stands, class bubbles cannot mix with each other. **Therefore, general assemblies are not taking place in the PE hall. Instead, virtual assemblies are being held and we are also making great use of our intercom for announcements and to continue celebrating birthdays!**

**Corridors:**

The new entry and exit procedure for each class into the school building (outlined earlier) will greatly reduce the amount of traffic along the corridors in our school. Briefly passing someone in a corridor is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection. To further reduce the risk involved the following measures have been adopted:

- physical distance will be maintained while using the corridor.
- informal group discussion/conversation will be avoided.
- the new floor surface (marmoleum) allows for improved cleaning and disinfecting.

**Ventilation:**

Prior to our return to in-school education on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February we updated our ventilation guidelines as per new guidance received.

The Minimum ventilation required is:

- Windows fully opened during breaks, partially opened while room is in use
- Windows fully opened in the evening after children have left for 15 minutes to have room ready for the next day
- Windows partially opened while room in use
- Several windows partially open as opposed to one window fully open
- Partially open windows nearest and above radiators in winter, if temperature of the room is an issue
- Internal doors may be left open to allow for ventilation

We also suggest opening all windows in the morning and leaving open as much as possible. If the class has to have their break inside (wet days) windows are to be opened fully for a period of time similar to breaktimes. If the weather takes up and classes can go outside for a movement break windows will be opened fully.

**Personal items in the classroom – Coats, Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.**

In order to minimise risk the following procedures will be adopted:

- **Chairs** - Children will have their own chairs, clearly labelled with their names.
- **Coats** - Each child will hang their coat on the back of their chair, until such time as another system can be put in place, such as coats hangers arranged according to pods.
- **Baskets** - Each child will have their own storage basket (provided by the school) on their table to store their books, copies, pencils, etc.
- **Books** – each child will have their own copy of each book that will be used, clearly labelled and provided by the school under the book rental scheme.
- **Sharing** - Children should use their own stationery - pens, pencils, rubbers, colours, scissors, glue stick, etc. and as far as possible should not share with other pupils.

**Office:**

A contactless payment system was set up in 2019 to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/Guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for contactless payments through the school office.

Children will not be sent to the Secretary's Office or to the Reception area to deliver messages.

As a general rule, staff members do not enter the Office area but speak with the Secretary at the Reception area. An extra Perspex sheet has been added at the hatch for extra protection.

**Aladdin Connect \*\*\*\***

All of our parents have now downloaded The Aladdin Connect App and it is used as one of our main forms of communication within our school community.

It was used extensively during our recent closure to send and receive messages to/from parents, to distribute work to parents and children and to allow work to be sent back to teachers to facilitate correction and feedback.

**Photocopying:**

A sanitiser dispenser has been installed beside the photocopier for staff use. Wipes will also be provided to staff to clean the photocopier after each use. Staff will maintain physical distancing when using/waiting to use the photocopier. 2m markers have been put down on ground to ensure appropriate distance is maintained.

**ICT equipment:**

A timetable has been drawn up for the use of common ICT equipment such as iPads. No sharing of iPads allowed. Some new iPads were purchased to ensure we have a full class set for every class. iPads are assigned to only one class per day to allow for time for this cleaning process. Each child is assigned an iPad that they use every time. A clear cleaning procedure is also in place to ensure they are cleaned after use. The recommended 70% IPA wipes are provided to clean devices after each use.

**Visiting Teachers/Coaches:**

After careful consideration and consultation, coaching outside, under strict adherence to Covid-19 mitigation measures, took place from October to December. This is currently on hold (March 2021) but will be reviewed before being put in place again and will remain under constant review as required.

**Substitute Teachers and SNAs:**

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be made available to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom. The DES has made more absences substitutable as part of their COVID-19 Response measures for schools. This avoids the splitting of classes and mixing of bubbles. The DES has provided specific guidance relating to covering absences. All casual substitutes will be asked to wear medical grade masks at all times.

**Physical Education and P.E. Equipment:**

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Staff members and pupils may also spend additional time outside during the school day.

Weather permitting, outdoor areas will be used as much as possible for PE and other suitable activities. PE takes place outside and each class remains in their own separate area to ensure that class bubbles do not come into contact with each other. Consideration will be given to PE lessons which can be taught outdoors and those that require little or no equipment, e.g. athletics. Where PE equipment is used it will be limited to use within a class bubble and cleaned/stored for a period of time until it is deemed safe for use by another class bubble.

There is no PE timetable currently, as all of these types of activities are encouraged to take place outdoors if at all possible. The PE hall may be used for socially distant activities such as drama. The children will remain in their pods for group activities.

The PE hall is used every day by the ASD class (6 pupils) and is cleaned after use.

**Appointments:**

Parents are asked to contact the office by phone on 053-9158854 to arrange appointments rather than arranging in person at the school office.

Phone calls/virtual meetings will replace face to face appointments – no face to face meetings will be arranged until further notice. Other forms of communication will also be utilised, e.g. Aladdin Connect and professional email.

**Parent/Teacher Meetings:**

Our official Parent Teacher meetings took place in late November and early December by phone, with each parent choosing their preferred day/time on Aladdin Connect.

**Visitors to the school:**

Visitors to the school will be strictly kept to a minimum. All visitors will be required to wear a mask and report to the office where they will fill out a contact tracing form.

**Staffroom and staff meetings:**

All staff members are asked to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres in common areas, e.g. when they are using the staffroom and when arriving/leaving each day. Staff must sanitise hands before entry to the staffroom due to shared touch points e.g. door handles, burco boiler, fridge door etc.

Face are coverings worn in all common areas.

Staff meetings will be held remotely for the most part, or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

There will be a limited amount of staff using the staffroom at any one time to allow for physical distancing. Staff members are asked to bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible. Chairs in the staffroom are 2m apart, with markings are on the floor to show correct positioning.

**Teaching and Learning:**

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines **‘Returning to School Curriculum, Guidelines for Primary School Leaders and Teachers, July 2020’** for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school. Please refer to section 3.6, page 15 for the specifics. As we settle back in, we will update you on these curricular changes – August 2020

Staff will be mindful of the impact of a second school closure within a 12 month period on children’s wellbeing and learning. With each new phase of reopening teachers will allow children time to settle in and then reassess where they are at in terms of their learning. Core areas of literacy and numeracy will be targeted with emphasis on integration for other subject areas such as SESE and the Arts. SPHE and PE will be key areas in terms of children’s overall wellbeing. SNAs will help the children they work with to settle back into school life and provide any extra supports that may be required during this settling in period, e.g. extra movement breaks, withdrawal from class for brief periods, targets and rewards, etc.

**Supporting the Learning of Children Who Cannot Attend School:**

If a child is **high risk** and not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.

The majority of parents have already provided an email address at which the school can contact them to support Home Learning. This will be especially important if the school, or parts of the school have to close due to HSE advice. Parents, if you have not already done so, please email [piercestownns@gmail.com](mailto:piercestownns@gmail.com) and you will be added to the Contact List for Home Learning.

**Wellbeing of the School Community:**

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus which is extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

**The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

**Masks will be worn by all staff members where a distance of 2m cannot be maintained. All SNAs and SET teachers are required to wear medical grade masks. Bus escorts are also required to wear medical grade masks.**

**Extra PPE may be required for particular tasks or in particular areas. This might include roles such as:**

- **Assisting with intimate care needs.**
- **Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation.**
- **For the administration of first aid**
- **Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.**
- **When staff members have to move between classrooms to support children with learning needs.**

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

**Face coverings:**

The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings.

**Medical grade masks** will be provided to staff members for use where a physical distance of 2m cannot be maintained. **Visors may be worn with masks to offer extra protection. The use of visors on their own is no longer recommended due to new guidelines based on research which shows that they do not offer the same level of protection as masks.**

Mask changing stations: baskets with masks have been placed in key areas throughout the building so that clean masks are readily available and easy to access. Bins with lids are placed under each basket to dispose of used masks safely.

**Gloves:**

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.

Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are assisting with intimate care needs or administering First Aid.

There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

**Hygiene and cleaning:**

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Meetings have been held with our contract cleaners to ensure all guidelines are followed. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

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 are asked to thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school. New pedal bins with lids will be placed in all classrooms.

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

There are sinks in all classrooms as well as sinks in each toilet. All classrooms have soap and hand towel dispensers installed at their sinks. All sinks have clear signage on how to effectively wash your hands.

Our water is cold for safety, but research has shown that this is just as effective for handwashing when used with a soap that emulsifies easily. This advice has been adhered to in the purchase of our soap as per DES guidelines. (see page 16 of COVID-19 Response Plan).

Hand hygiene (washing/sanitising) and coughing/sneezing etiquette will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

Children will be encouraged to wash their hands properly and often, and in particular at the following times:

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after eating or preparing food
- Before and after using protective gloves
- Before and after being on public transport
- When arriving and leaving the school campus
- After toilet use
- When hands are physically dirty
- When entering and exiting vehicles

- When entering and exiting the school building

Children will also be encouraged and reminded to:

- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve when coughing and sneezing
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash their hands
- Develop a routine of increased cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched objects and surfaces

#### **Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19:**

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians **MUST** keep children at home if they:

Your child has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- any other common symptoms of COVID-19 - a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath or an existing breathing condition that has recently become worse
- been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- been living with someone who is unwell and may have COVID-19
- other uncommon symptoms of COVID-19, such as sore throat or headaches
- diarrhoea
- returned from another country in the last 14 days

Similarly, staff **MUST NOT** attend school if they display any Covid 19 symptoms or if they are living with someone who is self-isolating or waiting for a Covid-19 test or have returned from another country in the last 14 days as per government guidelines at present.

Any Staff Member who has tested positive for Covid-19 must not return to work until deemed fit to do so and upon approval of their medical advisor.

A designated isolation area has been created in an area beside our PE hall.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedures will be implemented.

The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 metres will be maintained. The person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.

**The child may be asked to wear a mask.**

If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.

Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area. A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic. The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.

Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.

If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

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 and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

**COVID-19 Related Absence Management:**

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

**Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution:**

If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil. If a substitute teacher/SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class/pupil to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In these instances, section 5.4 of circular 45/2020 will be applied, namely;

**Sequence for covering all teacher absences:**

1. Supply panel if the school is part of a supply panel cluster arrangement,
2. School's own panel of regular substitutes,
3. National substitute service,
4. If no substitute is available from above options then a school may
  - For teachers in mainstream classes, schools use other non-mainstream teachers to cover the absence. A substitute may be employed on a subsequent date when one is available. On that day, the mainstream classroom teacher will undertake non-mainstream teaching and the substitute will teach the mainstream class.
  - For non-mainstream teachers a substitute may be employed on a subsequent date when one is available. Special Needs Class teachers (i.e. Miss Sinnott) cannot be used in this way.
5. Administrative Principal if applicable
6. Local arrangements that facilitate the pupils to be supervised in a manner that does not involve them being split between existing classes in classrooms

**Redeployment of staff may occur during the phased return to school – March 2021**

**Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme:**

Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team.

An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.

The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

### **Human Resources**

**The following human resources have been allocated through additional funding from DES for COVID- 19 reopening of schools – August 2020:**

- Aide to assist in preparing the building – 2 days
- Deputy Principal – 5 Leadership and Administration Days to be utilised throughout the year. These will be used in due course as deemed appropriate.

### **Key Dates**

**Week beginning Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August:**

- Contact the school community and inform everyone that the BOM's COVID-19 Response Plan along with the COVID-19 Policy Statement will be published on the school website

**Week beginning Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August:**

- Elect Lead Worker Representative and Deputy Lead Worker Representative.
- Draw up list of required PPE, etc. so that it is ready when the Procurement process opens.
- Appoint the 'Aide' to assist in preparing the building.

**Week beginning Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August:**

- Publish Risk assessment and Logistics plan to school community this week.
- Discuss with all staff the measures and protocols in place.
- Have all interactive whiteboards and laptops serviced.
- Complete all works and essential maintenance taking place over the summer to ensure the safest reopening of our school
- Meet BOM to approve the layout of the classrooms and refurbishments to the premises to ensure the safe reopening of our school.
- Organise BOM and ISM to monitor progress against tasks.
- **Thursday – 20<sup>th</sup> August** Meet Junior infants 2020 2021 in two smaller groups for a two hour period to familiarise themselves and reduce their anxieties starting 'big school' officially on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August.
- **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August** - BOM to meet and approve all refurbishments and procedures and logistical plans.
- **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August** – Logistics plan to be emailed to school community.

**Week beginning Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August:**

- ISM and Staff meetings to monitor progress against tasks.
- Final checks for safety of school in preparation for reopening.
- Video to be made available to school community re the new arrangements for the arrival/entry to the school premises for children
- **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August** - All staff on site to finalise arrangements.
- **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August** – Final letter to all parents/guardians with regard to school reopening

➤ **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August – School Reopens for ALL children – Welcome back!**

Following school closure after the Christmas break, remote learning took place for all from the 11<sup>th</sup> January till the 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

- ISM and Staff meetings took place during school closure with regard to remote learning and preparing for reopening.
- Review of building/grounds, final checks and appropriate actions carried out as necessary for safety of school in preparation for reopening.
- **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February** Reopening of special class under Phase 2
- **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March** Reopening for Junior infants to Second class, all SET teachers and SNAs under Phase 3
- **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March** provisional date for reopening for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes
- Risk Assessment reviewed and updated prior to reopening
- New Covid Response Plan adopted and uploaded on the website
- Policies and procedures updated and adopted at BOM level
- For interim period during Phase 3 a temporary staffroom has been set up in 6<sup>th</sup> class

Prior to this return the DE issued new guidelines for staff and parents. Staff were asked to

- Review relevant training provided by DE – teachers/SNAs/bus escort, etc.
- Asked to download the Covid tracker app
- Complete a revised Return to work form
- Advised not to return to or attend school if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if they live with someone who has COVID symptoms
- Advised not to return or attend school 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
- Advised to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school

Prior to our phased return to in-school education in February/March, during our contact with parents we:

- Arranged for parents to complete Return to Education Form in respect of children returning to school and after any absence from school – Aladdin Connect used to facilitate this from March 1<sup>st</sup> onwards
- Reminded parents of the importance of not congregating at or near school and that communication with the school must take place by phone or online
- Reminded parents of school policy in relation to children with symptoms of COVID-19
- Reminded parents not to send children to school if they are close contacts of a person with COVID-19, are awaiting a test or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
- Advised parents not to send pupils to school if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- Advised parents not to send pupils to school if they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances, parents are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel
- Advised parents to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school

**Review:**

This plan will be reviewed as the need arises and in line with DE Guidelines/Public Health advice as it emerges.

The Board of Management would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation.