



# Swords Educate Together National School

Roll Number 20145 O

## Covid-19 School Response Plan Phased Reopening March 2021

### General Information

<b>Name of school:</b>	<b>Swords Educate Together N.S.</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Applewood, Swords, Co. Dublin.</b>
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>01 8903899</b>
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:info@swordseducatetogether.ie"><b>info@swordseducatetogether.ie</b></a>
<b>Denominational Character:</b>	<b>Equality Based</b>
<b>Patron:</b>	<b>Educate Together</b>

### 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 Swords Educate Together National School.

The 'Work Safely Protocol' is a revised version of the 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' containing the same elements and features of the original guidance but is updated to reflect the latest advice issued by Government and National Health Emergency Team (NPHET) to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>

It is important that the March 2021 phased reopening of school-based teaching and learning and the phased reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures that management and staff need to address may also change. As per NPHET and DES recommendations, a phased reopening of our school will facilitate children in Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> Class and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class returning to full time, onsite teaching and learning from 1<sup>st</sup> of March. All other classes will return to onsite teaching and learning following NPHET and DES guidance on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Swords ETNS will continue to provide remote learning to those pupils who are not in the first phase of reopening (3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class).

The response plan will support the continued, sustainable phased reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and developmental needs of the children in the school.

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

This document provides details of:

1. **COVID-19 School Policy**
2. **Planning and Preparing for Return to School**
  - **School Building**
  - **Signage**
3. **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
4. **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
5. **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
6. **General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
7. **Managing the Risk of Spread of Covid-19**
  - **Wash Hands Frequently**
  - **Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitiser**
  - **Avoid Touching your Eyes, Nose and Mouth**
  - **Physical Distancing (Adults/Children)**
  - **Limiting Physical Movement**
  - **Practice Respiratory Hygiene**
  - **People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)**
8. **Control Measures**
  - **Return to Work Form**
  - **Induction Training**
  - **Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**
  - **People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable)**
  - **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
  - **Wearing of Gloves**
  - **Cleaning**
  - **Access to the School Building /Contact Log**
  - **First Aid / Emergency Procedure**
9. **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
10. **Contact with Confirmed Cases**
11. **Staff Duties**
12. **Covid related absence management**
13. **Special Educational Needs**
  - **Hand Hygiene**
  - **Equipment**
14. **Physical Distancing Outside of the classroom/Yard/Supervision**
15. **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify them.

**Note:** The 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.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.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);

## 1. Swords Educate Together National School COVID-19 Policy

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



# COVID 19 Policy Statement

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

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education and Skills
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing (contact log will be kept for 28 days, after which it will be destroyed)
- ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- 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 and Skills 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)

**Fiona Mc Kiernan/Marie McGee**



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

Date: **26th February 2021**

**Chairperson, Board of Management**

## 2. Planning and Preparing for a phased Return to School (March 2021)

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

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

### ▪ **School Buildings**

Before re-opening schools in the new school year schools completed a check the following:

- Flushing water system at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
- School equipment and mechanical ventilation has been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
- Bin collections and other essential services have resumed.

### ▪ **Signage**

Swords ETNS is required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. Posters and signage have been displayed in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

## 3. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff have completed a **Return to Work (School) [RTW(s)]** form. An RTW form should only be completed **within 3 days** prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

All school staff have completed **Induction Training** within the last week leading up to reopening of the school in September 2020. Details of any additional subsequent health and safety measures required to be put in place, will be communicated accordingly to all staff.

Parents/Guardians have been issued with a [Swords ETNS Return to School Declaration Form](#) and will have completed same as advised by NPHET and the Department of Education and Skills. (February 2021). We also must stress that parents/guardians should not congregate outside schools during this phase or at any stage.

## 4. 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 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 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:	Contact details
Fiona McKiernan / Marie McGee	01-8903899

All staff, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

#### 5. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment (Appendix 4)

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

The Board of Management will review emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the COVID-19 School Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented.

#### 6. General Safety Advice to prevent the spread of the virus

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- **High temperature**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties**
- **Sudden loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste.**

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a school is to minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place.

This can be achieved through the following measures:

- *Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors.*
- *Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases **not to attend school**, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.*
- *Advise staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 **not to attend school** and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.*
- *Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.*
- *Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.*
- *Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point, i.e. **School Foyer/outside the front door.***

Staff, pupils and visitors should, at all times, adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting themselves and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website – <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Swords Educate Together National School will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

#### 7. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19 in our School

##### **Wash Hands Frequently**

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

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

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

### **Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers**

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitiser (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities.

They will be available in each classroom, **outside the toilets** and at various points throughout the corridors including the reception area of the school building.

### **Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth**

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

### **Physical Distancing**

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

#### **Physical Distancing (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 distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed.

- **Staffroom and within School Building**

Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered break times etc. **No more than 6 staff will be in the staffroom at any one time.** Entry and Exit of the staffroom is signposted, one-way system is in operation.

- **Staff Meetings**

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Staff will not handshake or be in close contact with any other staff member. We will minimise gathering of school staff at the beginning or end of the school day. Certain staff will rotate between areas/classes but this should be minimized where possible e.g. SNAs and SEN Teachers.

- **Corridors and Stairwells**

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**

Adjusted play time/outdoor activities to minimise crowding at the entrance and exits (See Yard Supervision Rota 20-21). It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary school play together outdoors, but in so far as practical, it is helpful to keep to consistent groups. Staggered break times and outdoor access will be implemented. Children will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities. Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different children.

#### **Physical Distancing (Children)**

Staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and **where possible** 2m with the children in their class.

They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level, e.g. remain standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- **Increasing separation**
- **Decreasing interaction**

### **Increasing separation**

Documents provided by the Department of Education on optimal school layout have been used by Swords ETNS to increase separation to the greatest degree possible.

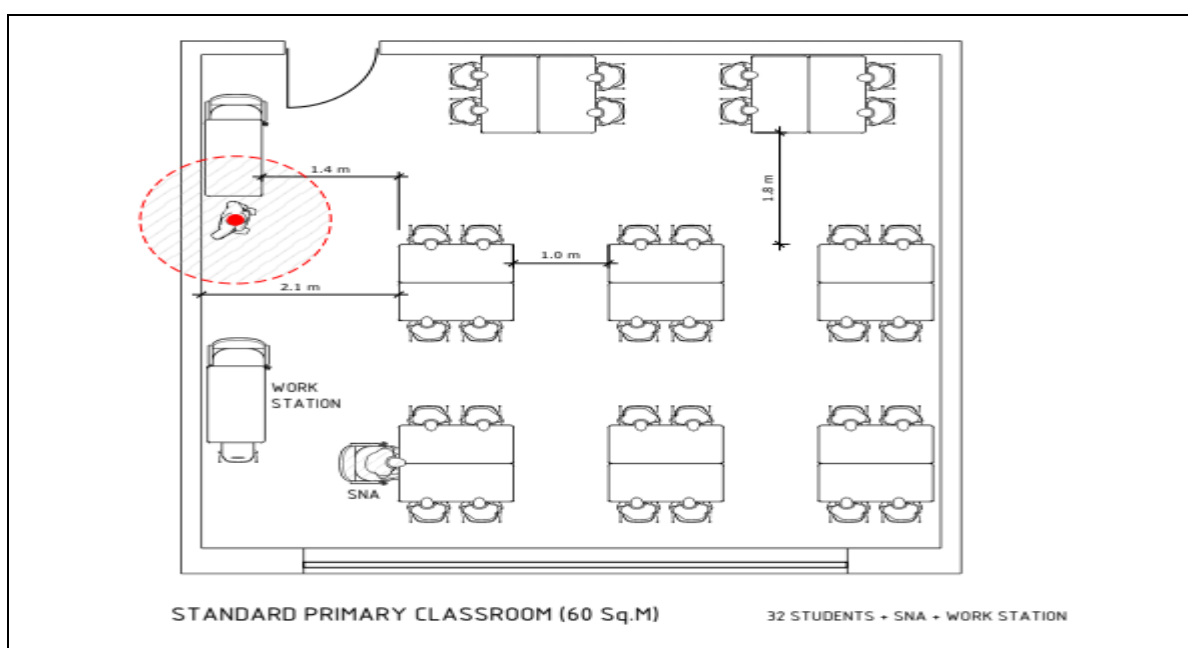
To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, we aim to;

- 1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing.**
- 2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing.**

Department of Education and Skills recommended layout available on;

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/>

### **Revised Layout JI – 6th Class (March 2021)**



*The teacher's desk should be at least 1m or where possible 2m away from pupil desks.*

### **Decreasing interaction**

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in a primary or special school will depend on the school setting and a common-sense approach is required for recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between pupils.

In primary and special schools a distance of 1m should be maintained between desks or between individual pupils. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore achieving this recommendation in the first four years of primary school, is not a pre-requisite to reopening a primary school for all pupils.

- *Where possible work stations should be allocated consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces which are shared.*
- *The risk of infection may be reduced by structuring pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a classroom/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.*

➤ *If the class is divided into Pods, there should be at least (1m distance) between individual Pods within the Class Bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible.*

Our objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible. Within Swords ETNS;

- *A class **Bubble** means the entire classroom.*
- *A class **Pod** is children at the same table within a classroom/bubble.*

The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles are an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

- *Pod sizes should be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context.*
- **We have agreed pod sizes for;**
  - **Junior Infants- 2nd Class can be up to and including 7 children per pod.**
  - **3rd-6th Class can be up to and including 6 children per pod.**
- *To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times, e.g. SNA/SEN Staff.*
- *Different Class Bubbles should where possible have separate breaks and meal times or separate areas at break or meal times .*
- *Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided/minimised where possible.*
- *Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible.*

**Additional measures to decrease interaction include:**

- *Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.*
- *Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged.*

**Limiting Physical Movement**

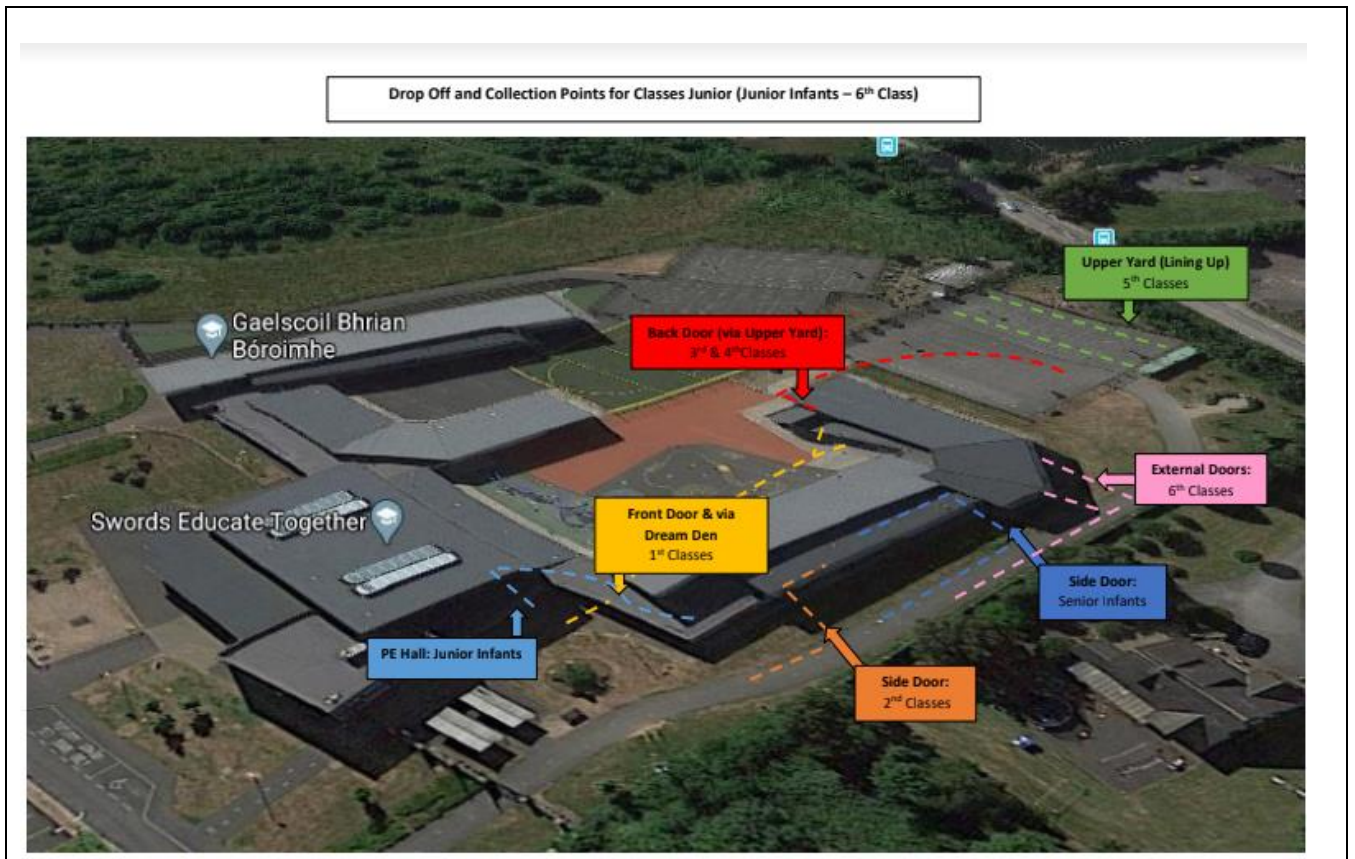
Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organised to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource.

- *Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.*
  - *Encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth).*
  - *Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.*
  - *Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school*
- School drop off/collection
- *Arrangements for dropping off/collecting pupils should be arranged to encourage physical distancing of 2m where possible.*
  - *Walking/cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible.*
  - *Arrangements should be made to maintain a distance of 2m between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff.*

**Entry and Exit points to the school building**

Our aim is to avoid congregation of people at the school gates where physical distancing may not be adhered to. Additional Entry/Exit points have been allocated to alleviate this, as shown in the figure below.





**Procedure**

- School Gates will open at 8.20a.m and entry points will be overseen by ISM/SEN Teams.
- Class teachers/SNAs will be in their classrooms to welcome the children.
- Children are required to walk to their entry points and straight to their respective classrooms.
- In line with DES and Government guidelines parents/guardians are not permitted into the school building. If parents/guardians have to enter the school grounds then face coverings must be worn and social distancing must be adhered to.
- We encourage parents to allow children to enter the school grounds on their own, at a social distance from other children.

**Increased Supervision at reception and home time**

In order to minimise risk, increased supervision from staff will also be implemented. This will be done at arrival time at 8.20a.m. The following staff are responsible for ensuring the safe arrival of the children.

Morning/Afternoon Supervision 8.20a.m/2.00p.m/2.05p.m/2.10p.m			
ISM/SEN	Location	Classes	Times
	2nd Class Entrance	2nd Class	8.20a.m/2.05p.m
	Foyer	1st Class Entrance	8.20a.m/2.00p.m
	Top Yard	5th Class monitoring	8.20a.m/2.10p.m
	Ramp on lower yard	3rd/4th Class Entrance	8.20a.m/2.00p.m
	Hall	Junior Infant Entrance	8.20a.m/1.10p.m
	Senior Infant Entrance	Senior Infants	8.20a.m/1.10p.m

## 8. Control Measures

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school. These control measures are outlined in this document.

The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis. It is critical that staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

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

The following control measures have been put in place:

### ▪ **Staff Return to Work Form**

Staff will be required to complete an RTW form within 3 days prior to any return to the school facility. The purpose of the form is to get confirmation from parents/staff that, to the best of their knowledge, he/she/children has/have no symptoms of Covid-19, are not self-isolating due to travel or contact with a confirmed case, cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.

The RTW/RTS Form will be completed again after absence from the school for a period of 14 days and/or after a period of holidays/sickness or return from leave of any kind. Substitute teachers/shared resource teachers will be required to complete the RTW Form prior to working in the school.

### ▪ **Induction Training**

All staff have undertaken and completed Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff has 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;

- a. The control measures that are in place in the school
- b. Their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19
- c. Any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the Covid-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal/Lead Worker Representatives.

**Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year has been developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff. Sept 2020.**

### ▪ **Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices. Guidance documentation and Information posters will be available at various locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety. Children, in general, should not have independent use of alcohol gel.

Handwashing facilities and hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility and are available in each classroom.

Pupils and Staff should 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

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

***We encourage the following practices:***

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

**We discourage:**

- Touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Sharing objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

Children must only use their own equipment such as pencils, erasers, sharpeners, pens and if utensils are required for eating lunch, then these must be brought from home. ***As per our Healthy Eating Policy and Green School Initiative, children must bring home any food waste each day.***

▪ ***People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable):***

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk. The HSE has set out these groups, which include people who:

- *are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well*
- *have 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 and Skills.

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

- **Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

It is mandatory that teachers and other school staff wear face coverings. **The school will provide surgical/medical grade masks for staff conforming to EU EN 14683 standard.** Primary school children will not be required to wear face coverings. Advice on how to properly use face coverings can be found here.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/facecoverings/>

Some staff may require the use of higher levels of PPE such as gloves, disposable aprons etc. which are available on site. The need for such PPE may include;

- **Assisting with intimate care needs.**
- **Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation.**
- **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.**

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

- **Wearing of Gloves:**

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by staff may, at times be necessary. Disposable gloves will be provided to all staff. However, wearing disposable gloves may not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

- **Cleaning**

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made. The school will be cleaned regularly during and after each school day by the school cleaners. Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day. There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils. Within the staffroom, all used utensils, plates, cutlery must be rinsed and placed into the dishwasher. Used surfaces must be wiped down and prepared for the next staff member.

▪ **Access to the school building /contact log**

Access to the school facility will be in line with agreed school procedures. Arrangements 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 log of staff and student's contacts. (See Appendix 1)

▪ **First Aid/emergency procedure**

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Swords Educate Together National School. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 Contact the principal, office or nearest staff member giving details of location and type of medical incident.

**9. 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 Swords Educate Together National School will deal with a suspected case that may arise.

Designated isolation areas have been identified within the school building.

- **Isolation Area 1 is located in the PTA Kitchen (adjacent to the P.E Hall)**
- **Isolation Area 2 is located on ground floor stairwell under 2nd Class Room 9.**
- **Isolation Area 3 is located in the Principal's office.**

*\*Isolation Area 2 should only be used in the case where Isolation Area 1 is in use.*

*\* Isolation Area 3 should only be used when Isolation Area 1 & 2 are in use.*

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Swords Educate Together National School, the following are the procedures to be implemented:

**Suspected Case (Child)**

If a child displays symptoms of Covid-19 please call the Office/The Principal using your mobile phone in the classroom. (**Mobile Phone Policy still applies except to make this call**)

- The Principal to attend and remove child from the classroom and bring to isolation point.
- If The Principal is not available, please contact your SEN person who will come and accompany the child from the classroom and bring to Isolation Room.
- Always use Isolation Room 1 in the first instance.
- Provide a mask for the child presenting with symptoms.
- Remind child not to touch anything during the transition to Isolation Room.
- The Principal/SEN Teacher should wear appropriate PPE and remain at least 2 metres from the child at all times.
- The School Secretary to be informed to call parent/guardian while the Principal/SEN Teacher remains with the child.
- Facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation if they cannot immediately go home.
- The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the child 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 they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Parents/guardians should pick up the child as soon as possible and child should be received by them through the nearest emergency exit (Hall/2nd Class Stairwell/Principal's office)

- At this point the classroom where the child came from should be isolated and HSE to be called for advice and recommendations.
- No further exit or entry to the classroom where the suspected outbreak has occurred should be permitted. Phone communication only via teacher and The Principal/Office.
- Isolation Room to be fully disinfected by Cleaner.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery

#### **Suspected Case (Teacher/Staff Member)**

- If a staff member begins to display symptoms then they should remove themselves from the classroom as quickly as possible, phone Principal/SEN Teacher and proceed to their car in the car park.
- SEN Teacher to take over the class.
- Call the Principal.
- The Principal to inform SEN Teacher/Deputy Principal to monitor the class.
- Principal to liaise with staff member and advise them to call their GP immediately. The Principal to liaise with staff member outside and at 2m physical distance.
- If they are too unwell to go home or seek advice, Principal will contact 999 or 112 and inform that the staff member is a suspected Covid-19 case.
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.

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.**

#### **10. Contact with Confirmed Cases**

If a confirmed case is identified in the school, staff who have had close contact will be asked to stay at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the [restricted movements guidance on the HSE website](#).

If the person develops new symptoms or their existing symptoms worsen within their 14-day observation period, they should call their doctor for reassessment.

Personnel who have been in close contact with a confirmed case include:

- Any individual who has had greater than 15 minutes face-to-face (<2 meters distance) contact with a confirmed case, in any setting.
- House-hold/family contacts.
- Passengers on an aircraft sitting within two seats (in any direction) of a confirmed case, travel companions or persons providing care, and crew members serving in the section of the aircraft where the index case was seated

For those contacts who have shared a space with a confirmed case for more than 2 hours, a risk assessment will be undertaken by Public Health Authority taking into consideration the size of the room, ventilation and the distance from the case. This may include office and training settings and any sort of large conveyance

#### **Cleaning**

Should a staff member develop symptoms while on site, or be a suspected/confirmed case of COVID-19, cleaning protocols as outlined in the [NSAI Guidelines](#) Chapter 4 Section 6 will be followed:

- *Keep the door to the room closed for at least one hour before cleaning*
- *Do not use the room until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry*
- *The person assigned to clean the area should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household or disposable single use non-sterile nitrile gloves and a disposable plastic apron (if one is available)*
- *Open the window while you are cleaning*
- *Clean the environment and the furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed or combined with Chlorine based product such as sodium hypochlorite (often referred to as household bleach). Chlorine based products are available in different formats including wipes*
- *Pay special attention to frequently touched flat surfaces, the backs of chairs, couches, door handles, taps of washbasins, toilet handles, and any surfaces or items that are visibly soiled with body fluids*
- *Place all waste that has been in contact with the person, including used tissues, masks if used, in a plastic rubbish bag, along with apron and gloves, and clean your hands. Place the plastic bag into a second bin bag and tie it, then clean your hands again*
- *Store the bag in a safe place until the result of the test is available*
- *If the test result is negative, place the waste in the normal domestic waste bin*
- *In the event the test result is positive, Public Health will advise what to do next*
- *If the person spent time in a communal area or they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then these areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined above) as soon as is practicably possible*
- *Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be put back into use*
- *There is no need to clean carpets unless there has been a spillage.*

### **11. Staff Duties**

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

- *Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.*
- *Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.*
- *Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing*
- *Self-isolate and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.*
- *Not to return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.*
- *If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined in Section 9 above.*
- *Complete the RTW form before they return to work.*
- *Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.*
- *Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.*
- *Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices*
- *Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.*

## 12. Covid related absence management

A Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

## 13. Special Education Needs

- For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in some instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parent/carer 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**. Similarly, staff should be aware of their responsibility **not to attend work** if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

### ➤ 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

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which require the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment, e.g. toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. 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. (Cleaner/SNA/Class Teacher)

## 14. Physical Distancing Outside the Classroom/Yard/Supervision

- The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.
- Swords ETNS will use a staggered individual yard time to minimise risk.
- Children will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.
- Yard Equipment will be designated to each Pod/Bubble for their own use only.

### Provisional Yard Supervision Rota 20-21

Small Break	Zone 1 Lower Yard	Zone 2 Upper Yard	Zone 3 Side Path	Zone 4 Hall/Front Area
10:00-10:10	Class 1	Class 5	Class 9	Class 13
10:15-10:25	Class 2	Class 6	Class 10	Class 14
10:30-10:40	Class 3	Class 7	Class 11	Class 15
10:45-10:55	Class 4	Class 8	Class 12	Class 16
Big Break: <i>Can be used for P.E</i>	Zone 1 Lower Yard	Zone 2 Upper Yard	Zone 3 Side Path	Zone 4 Hall/Front Area
11.25-11.45	Class 1	Class 5	Class 9	Class 13
11.50-12.15	Class 2	Class 6	Class 10	Class 14
12.20-12.40	Class 3	Class 7	Class 11	Class 15
12.45-1.10	Class 4	Class 8	Class 12	Class 16

*The template above is provisional and subject to change*

## 15. 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 fosters 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. This is supported through the Occupational Health Strategy comprising The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) and the Occupational Health Service. The EAS is provided through Spectrum Life which is available for all staff. Under the EAS Employees have a freephone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 (24hours a day 365 days a year). The school is supported also through guidance and professional support from Annmargaret Nolan (Wellbeing and Mindfulness Consultant)

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, confidentially.

### **Declaration**

This Covid-19 Response Plan has been ratified by Swords Educate Together Board of Management on:

#### **Version 3**

**Date:** February 2021

Yvonne Coakley  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Karl Breen  
Principal

A copy of this document has been provided to;

- each staff member,
- each family within the school community

*And is available on the school website [www.swordseducatetogether.ie](http://www.swordseducatetogether.ie)*

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Covid Policy Statement**
- Appendix 2: Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19**
- Appendix 3: Lead Worker Representative**
- Appendix 4: Risk Assessment Template**
- Appendix 5: Contact Tracing Log**
- Appendix 6: Checklist for School Management**
- Appendix 7: Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19**
- Appendix 8: Checklist Lead Worker Representative**
- Appendix 9: Checklist for Cleaning**
- Appendix 10: Return to School Declaration**