

St. Anthony's Special School
February 2021 COVID safety protocols and
updated risk mitigation measures for safe return to school on 11th February:

*These are newly updated as per latest guidance and in addition to the already reviewed
In School Daily Risk Assessment measures completed Dec 2020 and Jan 2021*

1. High Risk and Vulnerable workers: latest guidance from HPSC -
 - a. You could work from home if you are at high risk from COVID-19. See definitions at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html#high-risk>
 - b. If you cannot work from home because you are an essential worker, take extra care to:
 - i. practice social distancing where possible
 - ii. wash your hands regularly and properly
 - c. If you work in a school, it is safe to return to work once you follow the advice about social distancing and hand hygiene. **But talk to your school's occupational health service. They will carry out an individual risk assessment based on your situation.**
 - d. Ask the people in your life to take extra care to protect you from COVID-19.

2. PPE - HPSC Guidance for SNAs from Jan 7th 2021 recommends the following:
 - a. *As with all children, pupils with additional care needs should not be required to wear a face covering if they are under 13 years of age. Those who choose to wear a face covering may do so.*
 - b. *Pupils with additional care needs who are 13 years or older should not be required to wear a face covering if the face covering causes distress or is a barrier to their education and care needs. **We will be asking everyone over 13 to wear a face mask IF THEY CAN but no one with SEN will be forced to do so***
 - c. *In association with other measures specified the use of a face covering should be routine for SNAs in accordance with Government guidance. **This also applies to all SEN staff***
 - d. *When SNAs are within 2m of a pupil and to whom they are delivering personal care or attention for a period of time the face covering should normally be a surgical mask. If surgical masks are not available a cloth face covering should be used. If for any reason use of a surgical mask or cloth face covering is not practical for any reason, they should use a visor of a quality suitable for use in a healthcare setting however HPSC advice is that a visor does not provide protection equivalent to a mask*
 - e. *Masks should be removed and disposed of if they are wet or damaged. Masks should be removed and disposed of if going on a break or visiting the toilet.*
 - f. *Gloves and aprons should not be used routinely in the educational setting but If providing care that involves specific risk of exposure to blood or body fluids (oral fluids, faeces, urine) use of gloves and a disposable plastic apron is appropriate. These must be removed and disposed of safely and hand hygiene performed after caring for each individual. Note with respect to faeces and urine the risk of infection is related to other infectious organisms rather than COVID19.*
 - g. *If providing care that involves a risk of splashing of body fluids a visor is required to protect the eyes from splashing even if already wearing a surgical mask.*
 - h. *Hand hygiene should be performed before donning and after removing gloves.*
 - i. *Used PPE is generally discarded directly into domestic waste. PPE used when attending to a person with suspected COVID-19 while waiting for collection can be placed in a separate plastic bag, which is then placed in domestic waste.*

3. Use of medical grade or surgical masks type EN14683:
 - a. These will continue to be provided for all staff and must now be worn by all school staff during the interim arrangements under Level 5 restrictions. Each class will be supplied with a sufficient amount of masks.

- b. Use of visors alone without masks is not recommended especially when staff are in a higher position than children e.g. standing while a child is sitting at desk or eating.
 - c. Higher grade masks e.g. the KN95 [FFP2] masks may be worn for care taking place in paramedical area OR accompanying a person in an isolation area OR dealing with significant intimate care or fluids such as vomit.
4. Ventilation:
- a. HPSC guidance on 22-01-2021
 - b. DES guidance on 30 Nov 2020
 - c. In summary - fully ventilate classrooms when empty during breaks and be mindful of comfort levels in the room when the weather is cold - do not trade risk of one illness for another. Take regular breaks from the room if there are concerns but with fewer people in actual rooms there is less of a risk as well.
5. Appendix 3 - summary of additions to COVID-19 response plan required by "Work Safely Protocol" and have they been adhered to:
- a. RTW confirmation will be done by survey of staff - *completed by survey Feb 2021*
 - b. Preventing introduction and spread of COVID in schools:
 - i. All staff and pupils advised to self isolate and restrict movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (*staff meeting 5/2/2021, letter to parents 8/2/2021*)
 - ii. All staff and pupils advised not to attend work or school if they are identified as close contact, live with someone who has symptoms, travelled outside Ireland. (*staff meeting and survey 5/2/2021, letter to parents 8/2/2021*)
 - iii. Staff and pupils advised to cooperate with public health and mass testing (*staff meeting 5/2/2021 and in letter to parents 8/2/2021*)
 - c. Hand hygiene - all staff have own personal hand sanitiser and PPE kit bag: *staff to refill sanitiser bottles as needed and ensure kit bags have all needed.*
 - d. Ventilation - see above and *discussed at staff meeting 5/2/2021*
 - e. Staff encouraged to download HSE COVID-19 tracker app at *meeting 5/2/2021*
 - f. Staff duties - *outlined to all staff as at point b above*
 - g. Pre Return to Work Form - staff confirm their details have not changed - *done by survey 5/2/2021*
 - h. Checklists for management - *completed*
 - i. Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19: *Responsibility for managing the situation lies with the school nurse THEN/OR principal Or Deputy Principal OR LWR depending on staff availability. Other staff may be required to supervise the waiting person and follow directions of nurse etc.*
 - j. Cleaning checklists - *cleaning company asked to provide written confirmation of same*
6. Staff room will not be available for use for seated lunches by staff during interim phased return to school.
- a. It will be used as an alternative isolation room for arrivals into school who may be unwell.
 - b. Staff who need hot water may use berco boiler as long as they bring a covered cup and wipe after themselves - it may be better to use a flask for hot drinks during the interim return to school phase.
 - c. No kettles allowed in any junior classrooms as it is a major safety risk. Senior classes should use common sense and preferably have kettles stored away and used only under staff supervision.
 - d. Staff may still get hot soup from the kitchen - remember to cover the cup or bowl if transferring along corridors. Return the cup or bowl to the kitchen so it can be cleaned through the dishwasher.

7. Bubbles and staff movement:
 - a. It is recognised that special schools have no choice but to sometimes have flexibility to move staff to areas of greatest need. However because we will only have 50% pupil capacity on site during the interim phase this means that SNA staff should easily cover all care needs of pupils from their own classrooms where possible. The nurse will also be available but efforts to reduce the need for her to move between many classrooms and mixing should be tried where possible. Nurse is still available for emergencies.
 - b. Bubbles will remain as they are - the system worked during term 1 - what is needed is tightening procedures to ensure no crossover where possible. For example: we may need to add a 5 minute gap at eating times to ensure the GP area is fully cleared before the next group comes in. This is where keeping to times will be strictly enforced so staff need to be mindful of the same.
8. Use of corridors: No new guidance has been issued on any increased risk of transmission of COVID while passing on corridors. At the same time all staff and pupils will be encouraged to wear masks while using corridors. Pupils who cannot wear masks will not be forced to wear masks. A timetable may be drawn up if classes wish to use the corridor as their indoor walk during bad weather - this can be arranged between class teachers on the days required. Again because we will have 50% pupils onsite this may not become a major concern but can be kept under review.
9. Use of yard: masks do not need to be worn on yards by anyone unless staff are in close contact (less than 1-2m) with pupils or other staff.
10. Use of sensory room: this is a vital room needed by certain pupils. During the interim phase use of room will be restricted to those pupils who need it the most and it must be wiped down after use - if not possible to do immediately a sign on door must indicate that room cannot be used until cleaned by the SNA staff who were there with the child. All other use for general recreation is not valid until safer. Similar guidance applies for the use of the resource room (hoist room) - ensure it is wiped clean after necessary use.
11. Use of school bus and local amenities: bus will not be used until level 5 restrictions have been eased. No access to local amenities such as shops by either pupils or staff during the school day until level 5 restrictions eased. This includes staff going to shop to get lunch - we ask that staff ensure they have all they need before coming to work. Walks may be carried out in immediate local area avoiding any other people or crowds and staff should wear masks as they will be in close contact supervising pupils on walks. *Lough Lannagh is known to be crowded now with walkers and as such should not be used by pupils or staff during the school day until Level 5 restrictions are eased.
12. All equipment used by a pupil while at school such as Classroom aids, Wheelchairs, Standing Frames, Trays and Toilet Aids to be wiped down with disinfectant after use. This is the responsibility of the staff member who is with the child when the task has been completed. The virus can remain on the surface for some time and be transferred to the mouth, nose and eyes of another person on their hands after they touch the contaminated surface.