

Covid-19 Response Plan for the Safe Re-Opening of Our School



**Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS
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This plan is subject to change.

This Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

The plan incorporates current advice issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management, staff and the school community need to address may also change.

Board of Management

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS has carefully considered the Department of Education and Skills (DES) guidance documents for the safe re-opening of our school which were published on 27th July 2020.

These documents are:

- The Roadmap for the Full Return to School
file:///C:/Users/Principal/Downloads/82145_40753991-21a5-4715-a5a1-0f193df95ade.pdf
- COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools [file:///C:/Users/Principal/Downloads/82063_f53cc783-ed0a-4e55-bac0-18133323e90d%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Principal/Downloads/82063_f53cc783-ed0a-4e55-bac0-18133323e90d%20(1).pdf)
- Supporting the wellbeing of school communities as schools reopen: Guidance for schools <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52642-supporting-the-wellbeing-of-school-communities-as-schools-reopen-guidance-for-schools/>
- Returning to school - Curriculum guidance for primary school leaders and teachers
- DES Circular 0045/2020 https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0045_2020.pdf

The Board of Management's focus is the safety, health and welfare of everyone in our school community. The Board's aim in compiling and publishing this plan is to put measures in place to minimise risk and to manage any risk that may arise.

The Board will need the help and co-operation of everyone in our school community to ensure that we can get our children back to school safely on 1st September 2020.

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 same.

Note: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie, etc.

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS COVID-19 Policy Statement

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

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 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
- 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 **Miss Monica Kelly** or through the Deputy Lead Worker Representatives **Ms. Connie Fenton and Ms. Marianne Moore** who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: **D. Walsh**

Date: **19th August 2020**

Chairperson, BOM

Signed: **C. O'Reilly**

Date: **19th August 2020**

Principal

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

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 the 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 and the controls that have been put in place are outlined in this document.

Procedure for Returning to the Workplace (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (School) [RTW(s)] form, which is available electronically or from the Principal. (**Appendix 1**)

A RTW form should be completed by each staff member at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide:

- details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and
- details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at very high risk. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

The list of people in very high-risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if 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
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they 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 are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools.

In addition, when staff members of Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS have returned to work, they will be required to sign in/sign out daily for the purposes of Contact Tracing.

‘Notes for Staff Members’ outlining their responsibilities in relation to returning to work will be provided. (Appendix 5)

Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have 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 the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and will be updated with 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, who is supported in this role by the Board of Management (BOM).

Note: Induction Training for staff will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.

A national information campaign to support parents and pupils will happen in advance of schools reopening on issues such as COVID-19 awareness and to help minimise the risk of introduction and spread of the virus in schools.

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 the School Leadership. Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS has appointed a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) and a Deputy Lead Worker Representative (DLWR) in line with agreed procedures.

The role of the LWR 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.

Further details about the role of LWR or DLWR may be found in **Appendix 2**.

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
Monica Kelly Ms. Connie Fenton and Ms. Marianne Moore (Joint DLWRs)	Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS 051 832984

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.

Signage

Signage outlining the signs and symptoms of Covid-19, and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene has been displayed throughout the school in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

These include age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc.

Health and Safety Risk Assessment

In conjunction with its annual review of the school's Safety, Health and Welfare Policy, the Board of Management has carried out a Risk Assessment to identify and mitigate any additional risks due to Covid-19. (**Appendix 3**) Any necessary changes have been incorporated in the Safety, Health and Welfare Policy.

Access to the School and Contact Log

To keep everyone in our school community safe, access to Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS will be restricted to essential visitors only. Anyone who needs to visit the school must make an appointment in advance by telephoning the school office.

Anyone who must pay an essential visit to the school, must remain in the Reception Area. If it is necessary for visitors to go to any other part of the school, they will be escorted there by a staff member.

A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school will be maintained to facilitate Contact Tracing. (**Appendix 4**) Information collected on the sign in/sign out log will be used only for the purpose of Contact Tracing and will only be shared with Statutory Bodies should the need arise.

Control Measures - To Prevent the Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Our School

The following 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 and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

Staff 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.

- Staff or pupils that have symptoms should not attend school, should phone their doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation
- Staff members or pupils should not attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for a person with COVID-19 and should follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement
- Staff members and pupils that develop symptoms at school should bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly
- Staff members and pupils should know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
- Staff members who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days, should not attend school.
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff members and visitors where possible.

Children who Should Not Attend School

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

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have symptoms of Covid-19

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

Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School for Covid-19 Related Reasons

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time due to a Covid-19 related issue, 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 school will not be in a position to support the learning of children who stay at home for any other reason.

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. Mams and Dads, if you have not already done so, please email goodcounselhomelearning@gmail.com and you will be added to the Contact List for Home Learning.

Symptoms of Covid-19

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

There is no requirement to temperature check children when they come to school in the morning. **It would be very helpful if parents/guardians could check their child's/children's temperature before she/they leave the house.**

Respiratory Hygiene for Everyone in the School Community

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.
- Dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- Wash your hands.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

Hand Hygiene

26 sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom, etc.

Water and soap are available in all the cloakrooms, and at each sink in the corridors, staff bathroom and staff room.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in re-enforcing this message. <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

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.

Physical Distancing

At Primary school level, it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so, for example, if a child has an injury and needs first aid.

However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

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.

Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

Staff members (particularly Special Education Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized 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 bubble.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

Junior and Senior Infants	SET 1 (withdrawal)	SET 1 and SET 2 will work with these four classes for Aistear, Guided Reading, Ready, Set, Maths etc.
First and Second Classes	SET 2 (withdrawal)	
Third and Fourth Classes	SET 3 (withdrawal)	SET 3 and SET 4 will work with these four classes for Guided Reading, Ready, Set, Maths Groups, etc.
Fifth and Sixth Classes	SET 4 (withdrawal)	

Junior Infants to Second 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 Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble.

Third Class to Sixth Class

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will 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.

General Purpose (GP) Room

The GP Room may not be used for Assemblies, Physical Education or for any other gatherings of pupils. For the present, it will be divided for use as an additional Learning Support Space and for storage of P.E. equipment.

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.

We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when on the stairs and in the corridors.

Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways. To minimise interactions, the children will not need to change their shoes on entering the building i.e. no indoor shoes will be worn.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

Doors and Windows

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

Windows should be opened when children are singing as a group, or when they are playing musical instruments. Recorders should not be shared between pupils.

Cloakrooms and Toilets

Junior Infants, Senior Infants, and First Class will use the toilet block inside the side door.

Second Class, Third Class, Fourth Class, Fifth Class and Sixth Class will use the toilet block off the Landing. Additional soap dispensers and hand dryers have been installed in this toilet block.

Water heaters have been installed in both toilet blocks. They are already present in the other toilet facilities in the building, under the sinks in the corridors and in the staffroom.

Timetables will be drawn up so that only one class group at a time is present in the toilet block. **To further minimise risk, pupils will sanitise their hands before going to the cloakrooms/toilets and wash their hands with soap and water after using the toilet. Toilet cubicles and sinks will be sanitised after each class use.**

Breaks

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

To comply with the DES Guidelines, break times will be staggered. The yards will be divided so that each Class Bubble may play and exercise in its own space, without interacting with another Class Bubble e.g. 11.10-11.20: Top Yard First Class and Second Class, Main Yard – J. Infants and Senior Infants 11.30 – 11.40: Top Yard Fourth Class and Fifth Class, Main Yard – Third Class and Sixth Class.

Summarised Timetable for Breaks

Time	Place	Class
11.10 – 11.20 - Break	Half of top yard	First
	Half of top yard	Second
	Yard in front of shed	Junior Infants
	Yard in front of school	Senior Infants
11.30 – 11.40 - Break	Half of top yard	Fourth
	Half of top yard	Fifth
	Yard in front of shed	Third
	Yard in front of school	Sixth
12.45 – 1.00 - Lunch	Classrooms	J. Infs. S. Infs. First, Second
1.00 – 1.15 - Playtime	Half of top yard	First
	Half of top yard	Second
	Yard in front of shed	Junior Infants
	Yard in front of school	Senior Infants

1.15 – 1.30 – Lunch	Classrooms	Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth
1.30 – 1.45	Half of top yard	Fourth
	Half of top yard	Fifth
	Yard in front of shed	Third
	Yard in front of school	Sixth

Lunches

Mams and Dads must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice.

Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.

Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and as far as possible should not share with other pupils. **Each child should have a plastic pouch containing her own pencils, scissors, etc. which will be kept at school.**

Homework

To minimise the number of items coming and going from the school on a daily basis, no formal Homework will be assigned for the month of September. Children may be asked to engage in other types of work e.g. Active Homework, reading books they have at home, watching an online educational programme, etc.

Uniforms/Tracksuits

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day, and this is probably not practical for most families.

We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms and tracksuits. Uniforms should be worn every day, except on P.E. days, or when otherwise requested by teachers.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities.** Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

Office

A contactless payment system has been set up 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 should not be sent to the Secretary's Office or to the Reception area to deliver messages.

As far as possible, staff members should not enter the Office area and should speak with the Secretary at the Reception area.

Photocopying.

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

ICTs

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley.

Visiting Teachers/Coaches

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities such as Dancing, Coaching for games, Safe Cycling course, etc. will be explored. **It may be possible to conduct some of these activities outdoors.** However, it is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time.

Substitute Teachers and SNAs

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

Special Education Teachers may step into classrooms in the event that a Class Teacher is absent and a substitute teacher cannot be found. Splitting classes between other Class Bubbles is not an option at the present time.

Shared Special Education Teachers

One of our Special Education posts is shared with another school, one day per week. The DES has not issued any specific guidelines around shared teachers so this practice may continue. We will liaise with the other school to agree procedures around contact tracing and sanitisation.

Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows.

Staff members and pupils may take additional breaks outside during the school day. All classes are encouraged to participate in 'The Daily Mile'.

A timetable will be placed in the staffroom and teachers may 'book' P.E. equipment for use with their class. Teachers should leave enough time between bookings to allow for cleaning of the P.E. equipment, and where possible, two classes should not use the same equipment on the same day.

Staggered Drop Off and Collection Times

To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk to school if it is at all possible.

In addition to the Covid-19 restrictions, we will have only one entrance door to the school available to us while the extension is being built. This means that all the children will enter and leave the building through the Front Door.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds before/after school. To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not come onto the school grounds before the school doors open at 9.10a.m. *(Separate, special arrangements will be put in place for our Junior Infants and their Mams and Dads at the beginning of the school year.)*

Morning:

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 9.10a.m.

Parents are asked to 'drop and go' in the car park anytime between **9.10a.m.** and **9.40a.m.** **For the health and safety of everyone in the building, the school's door will be closed at 9.40 every morning. No parking will be allowed.** This system has worked well for us in the past and it helps to keep traffic moving. This will be especially important as we are also trying to manage entry to the building site.

Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival. Other staff members (including Special Education Teachers, SNAs and the Principal) will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to help them to their classrooms.

Afternoon:

(Special arrangements will be put in place for Junior Infants for the first two weeks of the school year)

From 14th September onwards:

1.45p.m. Class teacher will bring **Junior Infants** to the school gate. Mams/Dads are asked to drive in, 'pick up and go' until 2.00p.m. No parking will be allowed.

From 1st September onwards:

2.00p.m. Class teacher will bring **Senior Infants** to the school gate. Mams/Dads are asked to drive in, 'pick up and go' **until 2.15p.m.**

2.45p.m. Class teachers will bring First and Second Class to the school gate. Mams/Dads are asked to drive in, 'pick up and go' until 3.00p.m. Families that have children in Third, Fourth, Fifth or Sixth Class **as well as in First and Second Class**, may collect all their children at this time.

3.00p.m. Class teachers will bring Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes to the school gate. Mams/Dads are asked to drive in, 'pick up and go'. Supervision will be provided until 3.10p.m.

As many of our older girls walk home by themselves, there should not be as many cars arriving for pick-ups at this time.

Mams and Dads who walk to the school to collect children are asked to maintain a social distance outside the school gate.

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

Summarised Timetable for Drop Off and Pick Up

9.10	All staff to be present to support arrival of pupils
	Class teachers to be in their classrooms
	SETs, SNAs and Principal to support arrival of pupils

- 9.10 – 9.40 Arrival of pupils – Stop, Drop, Go system. No adults to enter the school yard. Children to go straight to their classrooms on arrival.
- 1.45 Stop, pick up go – Junior Infants
- 2.00 Stop, pick up, go – Senior Infants
- 2.45 Stop, pick up go – First and Second
- 3.00 Stop, pick up go – Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth

Parent/ Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher Meetings may take place via phone/ Zoom or be postponed. We will assess the situation closer to the time.

Staffroom

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

Teaching and Learning

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. 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 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 for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the girls during the return to school.

Wellbeing of the School Community

The mental health and wellbeing of everyone in our school community is a particular concern for us as we work towards the safe re-opening of our school.

We know that most of our girls, and indeed their families and school staff will be looking forward to going back, reconnecting with school, reconnecting with staff and friends and settling back into schoolwork. This will be a time of change, with new rules and routines to learn to keep everyone safe.

Some children may feel worried about returning to school, and that's normal. However, most will re-engage with little difficulty after an initial settling in period.

Supporting Wellbeing

We will work on 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 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 extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff members are not required to wear PPE. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work 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
- 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.

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 will apply standard precautions as per usual.

Masks

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

The guidelines do not recommend that staff wear masks or face coverings as these would hide facial expressions and make communication with the children more difficult. **(Where staff cannot maintain a distance of 2 metres, a face covering must be worn.)** Visors will be provided to staff members who wish to wear them.

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 looking after a pupil's 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

26 sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom.

Warm water and soap are available in all the cloakrooms, and at each sink in the corridors, staff bathroom and staff room.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in re-enforcing this message.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. 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 should 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.

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

Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

We love to see all of our girls at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

A designated isolation area has been created in the Front Hall.

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

The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.

If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, Mams and Dads are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times. Siblings of pupils who are unwell will also go home at this time.

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. **Each classroom will have a Covid-19 kit containing face masks, disposable gloves and aprons for this purpose.**

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.

If any member of the school staff, or a pupil of the school is diagnosed with Covid-19, the Principal will contact the HSE for advice.

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 such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class/pupil to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

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.

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Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

This questionnaire must be completed by staff **at least 3 days in advance of returning to work.**

If the answer is **Yes** to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Principal: _____

Date: _____

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Have you been advised by the HSE that you are a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
4.	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5.	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high-risk group? If yes, please liaise with your doctor and Principal re return to work and follow the agreed DES arrangements for very high-risk groups.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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Lead Worker Representative Role

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour Employer Economic Forum.

The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

The purpose of this section is to set out the provisions in respect of the LWR in schools. The operation of these arrangements will be kept under review by the parties.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- the COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol.
- the Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19.
- COVID-19 Response Plan for Primary and Special Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

1. Collaborative Approach

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 management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach are key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management. COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of primary and special schools

2. Role of the Lead Worker Representative

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts.
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice.
- In conjunction with school management, 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 school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice.
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures.
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them.
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area.
- Following any incident assess with the school management any follow up action that is required.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

3. What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?

The LWR may consult with, and make representations to, school management on any issue of concern in relation to COVID-19. These include issues in relation to:

- Cleaning protocols and their implementation
- Physical Distancing
- Implementation of one-way systems in the school to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the school
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the school
- Respiratory hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment
- At Risk Groups
- Visitors/Contractors

4. Lead Worker Representative

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

5. Deputy Lead Worker Representative/ Assistant Lead Worker Representative

In schools with less than 30 staff, a Deputy Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Deputy LWR will be to deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent.

In schools with 30 or more staff and in all Special schools, an Assistant Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Assistant LWR will be to:

- assist the LWR in their duties as set out above; and
- deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR, Deputy LWR and Assistant LWR positions as appropriate. The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR represents all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, if a teacher is selected for the role of LWR, then the Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR should be selected from the non-teaching staff where feasible and vice versa.

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR as appropriate should be arrived at by consultation and consensus at school level, through the seeking of volunteers to act in that capacity. Where there is more than one volunteer, all school staff should vote to select the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR.

The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the employer. LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have completed the provided training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

7. Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR

The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR shall be entitled to:

- Receive information and training in respect of their role [*further detail to be provided*].
- Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19.
- Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19.
- Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a teacher (including a postholder), the 10 Croke Park hours which can currently be used for planning on other than a whole school basis will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is an SNA, 10 of the “72 hours” will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a Secretary or Caretaker, a re-prioritisation of duties by school management should be carried out to afford the staff member sufficient time to carry out their duties in that role.

8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise

Where an issue of concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR may notify the Board of Management (Chairperson of the BoM in the first instance)/ Education and Training Board head office of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the BoM/ETB head office. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

Glossary of Terms

- **COVID-19 Response Plan:** plan designed to support the staff and BOM/ ETB in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for Primary and Special Schools are available on the Department’s website.
- **Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF):** the forum for high level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters of strategic national importance - involves the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Government & Employers.

- **Return to Work Protocol:** national protocol designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- **Safety Representative:** Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the selection and role of the Safety Representative in the workplace. The rights of the Safety Representative are set out in legislation. (Note: A Safety Representative has rights and not duties under the 2005 Act). This role is separate to the LWR under COVID-19.

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Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS Risk Assessment Form

COVID-19 Risk Template (List identifies COVID-19 as the hazard and outlines control measures required to deal with this risk)

Hazards	Is the hazard present? Y/N	What is the risk?	Risk rating H/M/L	Controls (When all controls are in place risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls *Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column	Person responsible	Signature and date when action completed
COVID-19	N	Illness	H	School Covid19 Response Plan in place in line with Department of Education guidance and the Return to Work Safely Protocol and public health advice		<i>Examples of Actions</i> Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette Complete School COVID-19 Policy Statement Return to Work Forms received and reviewed Induction Training provided Contact log in place Complete checklists as required: School Management How to deal with a suspected case Other school specific checklist	Name of staff member	

If there are one or more High Risk (H) actions needed, then the risk of injury could be high and immediate action should be taken. Medium Risk (M) actions should be dealt with as soon as possible. Low Risk (L) actions should be dealt with as soon as practicable.

Risk Assessment carried out by: _____ Date: / /

Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS Contact Tracing Log

Name of School: Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS		School Contact Person: Catriona O'Reilly	
Address of School: Ferrybank, Waterford		For Queries only: Phone No: 051 832984 Email: principal.gns@gmail.com	
Name of Visitor:		Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date of Visit:	___ / ___ / ___	Time:	Entry to school: ___ am / pm Exit from School: ___ am / pm
Visitor Status	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please complete: _____
Contact details of visitor	Company Name (if applicable)		
Address:			
Contact No.:		Email Address:	
Reason for Visit:			
Who the visitor met: (separate line required for each person the visitor met)			
Name of Person visited		Length of time spent with each person in the school	

Note: Information collected on this form will be used only for the purpose of contact tracing and will only be shared with Statutory Bodies should the need arise.

Notes for Staff Members

Staff members have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of the 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. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

You should adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.

Complete the Return to Work Form no later than 3 days before you come back to school and give it to the Principal.

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.

Complete the Induction Training provided before you come back to school.

Be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.

Coordinate and work with your colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.

Make yourself aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor your own wellbeing. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should not attend school. Phone your doctor and comply with HSE guidelines on self-isolation. Contact the Principal/Deputy Principal by phone as soon as possible.

Make sure that you sign in and sign out every day for Contact Tracing purposes.

You are responsible for keeping your own desk/workspace clean. (Cleaning materials will be provided for you. They are only for use in the school building and should not be removed from the school.)

You are responsible for cleaning personal items that you bring to work, and that are likely to be handled at work e.g. mobile phones at breaktimes, etc.

If you leave a personal item down on a communal surface e.g. the staffroom table, you are responsible for cleaning the surface after you remove your personal item.

You should bring your own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school. Avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

If you use a communal piece of equipment, e.g. photocopier, guillotine, etc. you are responsible for cleaning it after use. (Wipes will be provided).

If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19 while you are at school, adhere to the procedure outlined in the BOMs COVID-19 Response Plan

If you have travelled to a country outside of Ireland that is not on the Green List, you must not return to school for two weeks after you arrive back in Ireland.

Keep yourself informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.