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Covid Response Plan

Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make an effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

Assumptions

- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system.
- The school is split into 3 groups with each group having different areas of the school yard dedicated specifically to them. This will be in line with their own classroom levels.
- Groups will be constituted as follows:
 1. Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st Class
 2. 2nd Class, 3rd Class, 4th Class
 3. 5th Class, 6th Class
- The day will include 2 x 20 minute breaks
- Within each class from 3rd to 6th, the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods where possible.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points of the school and in each classroom.

- Each classroom will have their own entry/exit door that will only be used by them.

Key to Entrances & Exits

Entrance and Exit Points (when facing the school building)	Number
Front left of school – Mrs. Quill’s class	1
Preschool entrance	2
Main entrance of school – used for visitors who have previously obtained permission to enter	3
Front right of school – Ms. O’Flaherty’s Class	4
Front far right of school – Mrs. Curtin	5

The main double gates will be open each morning and evening for children to enter/exit the school yard.

Arrival at school

As you are aware, school starts at 9:20am each morning. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions we can no longer accommodate children playing in the school yard prior to the bell ringing each morning. The following are the new procedures:

- The main double gates of the school yard will be opened at 9:10am each morning. Pupils must not enter the school yard until these gates are opened.
- Each class teacher will be in their classroom from 9:10am
- Once a pupil enters the school yard he/she must go straight into their classroom. A staff member will be present at the school gate to direct the children.
- Pupils are asked to come to school at any time between 9:10am and 9:30am.
- We would urge you not to arrive any later than 9:30am as we are extremely restricted regarding social distancing of staff and pupils.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building or the school yard.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by email or via the school phone – (068) 49522. Each teacher has an individual email address at which they can be contacted if needed.

End of School Day

- Adults who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should remain at their car until the child comes to the main gate.
- A staff member will be at the school gate supervising each morning and evening.

- Junior and Senior Infants will be brought to the school gate at 2pm each day by their class teacher. They will be lined up in their respective pods. We would ask that parents remain standing outside their cars – the class teacher will allow the children leave the yard once we see the parent.
- 1st – 6th Class – the class teacher will allow each pod to leave the classroom separately in order to minimise contact at the following times:
 - 1st Class – 2:50pm
 - 2nd, 3rd & 4th Class – 2:55pm
 - 5th & 6th Class – 3pm
- We would request that parents do not gather at the school gate in the morning or in the afternoon. Your co-operation and understanding on this is greatly appreciated.

Collection of Children during the School Day

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply

- School must be notified in advance with as much notice as possible. Parents should notify the teacher via email. This must be done in a timely manner as teachers will not be able to check their emails during teaching time.
- Once the school is notified a member of staff will place the requested permission slip on Aladdin. The parent must agree to this permission prior to removing the child from school (This is the same criteria as signing the child out as we have done previously).
- When the adult arrives at the school, they should phone the office from their car to alert the school that they have arrived.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult at the school gate by a member of staff.
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures that will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in the isolation room, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP if required.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided.

- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

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.

Children who should not attend school

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

- Children who have been diagnosed with 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.

Uniform

Alternate days for wearing of school uniform and school tracksuit as follows:

Monday – School tracksuit

Tuesday – School uniform

Wednesday – School tracksuit

Thursday – School uniform

Friday – School tracksuit

This applies to **all** children from Junior Infants to 6th Class.

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time due to COVID-19, the class teacher (and/or the special education teacher, where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child's learning at home. This will be shared with parents. If you have a child in this category please notify the school immediately at info@murhurns.com.

Personal Equipment

- In so far as possible, it is requested that all children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, erasers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.
- We ask that each child has a pencil case for home and one for school. The school pencil case can be left with all the other belongings. This will avoid sharing of items between children.
- Please note that if a child comes to school without some of his/her belongings it will not be possible for parents to drop them as would have happened in the past. So please ensure lunch boxes etc. are in their bags each morning on the way to school!
- Each child has their own plastic storage box with a lid. This box will contain all your child's books and requirements for school. At the end of each school day the children will bring their boxes and stack them at the end of the classroom to facilitate cleaning of desks.
- A Perspex screen is on each desk in each classroom for the further protection of the children.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in the Infant classroom. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

Yards

The school yard will be broken up into three areas as follows:

- Front of the school – Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st Class
- Back of school – 2nd class, 3rd class, 4th class
- Basketball court 5th class, 6th class

This division of the yard facilitates a natural distribution according to classes. It means that children will only be in contact with children from their own classrooms from the beginning to the end of each school day.

Yards will be supervised at all times by teachers and SNAs.

Special Education

In keeping with our Special Education policy, extra 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 within the confines of a bubble.

- Where a special education teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children from 3rd to 6th Class receive support in the SET room, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained.
- The tables and chairs in SET room will be wiped clean in between different pupils attending.

PPE

Staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks. All staff members will wear a cotton mask at all times. Surgical grade masks, to EU Standard EN 14683, be available for all staff members interacting with pupils.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances the following is the sequence for covering teacher absences (as per Circular 0045/2020):

- For teachers in mainstream classes:
 - schools use other non-mainstream teachers (SET) to cover the absence. A substitute may be employed on a subsequent date when one is available.
- For non-mainstream teachers a substitute may be employed on a subsequent date when one is available.
- Local arrangements that facilitate the pupils to be supervised in a manner that does not involve them being split between existing classes in classrooms.

In the unlikely event that all these options have been exhausted it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

PE

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. If the Community Centre is being used by class groupings, common touch points should be cleaned prior to the class leaving.

Information for Parents

- It is **mandatory** that parents complete the Declaration Form on Aladdin Connect prior to pupils returning to school. This declaration states that you have no reason to believe that your child has infectious disease and have followed all medical and public health guidance with respect to exclusion of your child from educational facilities. This declaration must be signed via Aladdin prior to your child returning to the school building. It must also be completed when pupils are returning to school after any absence.
- There should be no congregation outside schools at any time throughout the school day.

Staff Duties

- Staff members must not return to school in the event of the following:
 - If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Co-operate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school.

- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.
- Confirm, in writing, that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following this period of school building closure.

Ventilation

As per the *Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools* windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break times or outdoor PE time) and also at the end of each school day. Windows should be partially open when classrooms are in use.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Principal

Date: _____