

MARKETHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Tomorrow's Success Begins Today...



COVID-19 Policy

RATIONALE

Covid-19 has impacted on all aspects of school life in Markethill Primary School. Daily routines, the curriculum and decision making have been affected by the importance of adhering to The Department of Education (DE) guidance relating to health and safety measures within schools. In line with DE guidance, this document sets out the measures in place to reduce any potential risk of the spread of COVID-19. It was devised in line with relevant documentation, current practice and stakeholder consultation.

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease and research suggests that it spreads primarily through respiratory droplets generated by coughing or sneezing and through contact with contaminated surfaces. In order to protect yourself and others from infection, Government guidance states the importance of:

- exercising social distancing (2 metres for adults);
- frequent hand washing or using an alcohol-based rub (sanitiser);
- refraining from touching your face, in particular eyes, nose and mouth; and,
- good respiratory practice: coughing and sneezing into a tissue which is disposed of carefully, or your elbow.

Guidance from The Department of Education, in relation to Primary School children, recommends distancing, in as far as possible but, where possible, with 2m between adults and children.

Guidance Consulted in the writing of this policy includes:

The Department of Education

<https://www.educationni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/NorthernIrelandReOpeningSchoolsGuidanceNewSchoolDayVersion213August2020.pdf>

Public Health Agency

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

The Education Authority

<https://www.eani.org.uk/education-restart>

POLICY AIMS

In order to address the issue of COVID-19, Markethill Primary School aims to:

- devise and implement risk assessments;
- implement measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19;
- provide stakeholders with assurance that measures are in place to help mitigate risk;
- monitor and evaluate measures in line with the school risk assessments;
- provide information on how the school will deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 in school;
- provide information on how the school will deal with confirmed cases of Covid-19.

MEASURES TO DEAL WITH COVID-19

SOCIAL DISTANCING

At all times, in as far as possible, social distancing will be encouraged. The Public Health Agency (PHA) recommends that this is 2 metres for adults.

Children will be encouraged to distance from each other, in as far as possible.

In line with the need for social distancing, measures taken will fall into two broad categories: *increase separation and decrease interaction.*

Though not exhaustive, these measures include:

- staggered arrival and departure times for individual classes;
- designated entry gates and doors for classes;
- designated entry times for classes;
- social distancing encouraged between parents / carers;
- signage throughout the school encouraging social distancing
- strict door policy to visitors encouraging pre-appointments to be made;
- pupil friendly signage indicating areas off limits to children in the school;
- allocated adult numbers in photocopying and staff room;
- operating a strict policy whereby only children from a class can use the toilets at a given time and which is to be monitored by each class;
- designated playground zones for each class
- timetables to provide hall time and outside time for each class;
- dinners and lunches to be initially eaten in classrooms; and,
- teachers to move to classrooms for afternoon classes.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Following DE guidance, staff are not required to wear PPE, unless administering first aid, medication or intimate care needs. If possible, medication should be administered at home.
- PPE available in school includes: visors, masks, gloves and aprons.
- PPE will be worn by staff when dealing with suspected cases of Covid-19.
- Staff who require providing one-to-one support or Foundation Stage staff, who may find it hard to socially distance themselves from the children in their class, may, if they wish, wear visors or masks.
- If staff are in an enclosed space for more than 15 minutes, masks are recommended.
- Staff may wear a mask or a visor if they wish.
- Parents / carers should wear masks when visiting the school.

HYGIENE

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Hand sanitiser is available in all classrooms.
- Wall mounted hand sanitizer dispensers are available at each entrance area.
- Sufficient handwashing facilities will be available. All classrooms have sinks and hand sanitisers will be available at entrance points throughout the school and in all classrooms.
- Handwashing facilities available in each classroom and promoted by all staff.
- Help will be available for children who may have difficulties cleaning their hands independently.
- Signage will be placed in toilets and classrooms reminding children to wash hands and how to wash hands thoroughly.
- Adults and children will clean their hands on arrival at school, before and after eating, after sneezing and coughing and before going home.

- Everyone will be reminded not to touch their mouth, nose and eyes.
- The importance of using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste will be emphasised. 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' posters will be placed around the school. Children should bring in a supply of tissues each day. A supply will also be available in the classroom.
- The importance of good hand and respiratory hygiene will be discussed and explained to children. Games, songs and repetition will be used to help encourage our young children learn and practise hygiene routines.
- We will ensure that all adults and children frequently wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly. We encourage parents to reinforce the importance of hand washing at home.
- Wall-mounted sanitiser dispenser units outside main entrances for children.
- Each classroom has been provided with a cleaning kit.
- Additional bins provided in each classroom.
- Parents have been asked to send in hand sanitiser and tissues with their child / children.

SCHOOL HYGIENE

- Cleaning will take place throughout the day with a thorough clean at the end of each school day. The EA Cleaning Service will complete cleaning checks.
- Surfaces that are touched such as desks, chairs, doors, handles, sinks, toilets, light switches will be cleaned more regularly than normal.
- Where possible, spaces will be well ventilated with windows open, depending on weather.

SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

In addition to hygiene measures, further actions to prevent transmission during the school day will include:

- Provide children with a designated classroom and group (referred to as their bubble) for lessons and play in order to minimise the opportunity for mixing.
- Have separate entrance and exit points for each class with children moving to classroom in morning, in social bubble.
- Have staggered start times and home times.
- Have staggered break and lunch times to limit class movement within the school. Children will remain in their class bubble at all times.
- Have designated zones in the playground for classes.
- Children not to bring toys or books to school.
- Remove and/or restrict access to unnecessary items in the classroom + items hard to clean.
- Not share PE equipment. Where possible, all classes/bubbles will have their own equipment in a box. If it is not possible to have class resources, equipment will be cleaned between each class use.
- Try to confine resources to classrooms to minimise sharing. Where sharing is required, resources will be cleaned before transference.
- Children will be seated facing the front of the classroom.
- Use PPE such as gloves, aprons, masks, hand sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes as identified in our Risk Assessments, when it is necessary to do so.
- Social distancing modelled by staff.
- Each class to have designated class time in the hall for PE and outside in their playground zone for activities such as daily mile and practical learning.
- Children will be seated with same peers daily.
- Record of pupil attendance at all times of the day.
- Cleaning of shared equipment in Foundation Stage at the end of each day.
- Staggered staff breaks and lunches.

BREAK-TIME AND LUNCH-TIME

- **Staggered break-times:** each class has been allocated a 30-minute slot with 5 minutes at the start to allow for hand washing and 10 minutes at the end to allow for entry to classroom, use of toilet and hand cleaning. Children will have 15 minutes break either outside or inside, if wet. Children will return to their classroom via their designated door. Pupils will be in socially distanced line exiting and entering building. No class is allowed to leave the classroom until the previous class has returned. Classes will remain in their bubble at all times.
- The school playground area will be zoned into 4 areas and classes will be allocated an area which they will use at break and lunch time and for PE.
- **Staggered lunch times:** children will eat lunch in the classroom initially. Children will be able to avail of a single option school dinner which will be eaten in their classroom. A menu will be available the week commencing 24 August 2020. When children have become familiar with movement around the school in their designated areas, consideration will be given to children using the hall to eat school dinners.
- Lunch-time has been reduced to 30 minutes to allow 15 minutes for children to eat their lunch and 15 minutes of play outside in their designated class zones, weather permitting.
- If wet, the children will spend the 15 minutes in their classroom. Children will be required to sit at their desk and complete a rainy day activity book.
- Children will enter and exit the building at all times through their designated doors.
- Children will be supervised when entering and exiting the building at start time, break time, lunch time and home time.

WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD BRING TO SCHOOL EACH DAY

- A school bag, lunch bag / box and water bottle that can be wiped down. Water bottles should be pre-filled. Water fountains in school will not be in use. These items must be taken home each day and washed.
- Coats may be needed on cool or wet days.
- Children may bring in one pencil case containing essential stationary items. These can be replenished when needed. Children will not be permitted to share items. School will also provide resources, if needed, to prevent sharing.
- Children are not permitted to bring in any items from home such as toys or story books.

SUPPORTING THE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF CHILDREN

- All staff will be available to provide support.
- Our Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, Mrs McCool, and SENCo, Mr Foster, will work to ensure that the needs of our children are met.
- Children will be given opportunities to discuss their feelings, play, rebuild friendships and have 'chill out' spaces for times when they may feel overwhelmed. PDMU lessons and Circle Time will be used to help children express / discuss feelings and thoughts.

HEALTH

- If a child presents as unwell in school, he/she will be isolated and supervised by a member of staff until collected.
- If a member of a household displays COVID-19 symptoms, the school must be informed as soon as possible.
- All relevant PHA guidelines must be followed.
- If you have been visiting a country that requires you to quarantine on your return, you **must** comply with this. Failure to do so is putting the health of the school community at risk.
- Please ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details for your child so that we can make contact easily should that be necessary.

MONEY

DE guidance recommends that:

- The correct money should be sent into school in a **plastic bag or wrapped in cling film** for hygiene purposes. The school will also accept money in an envelope. Please ensure you include a note or write on the envelope your child's name, the amount enclosed and what the money is for.
- The school is hoping to introduce a cashless system which would do away with money being sent into school.
- Staff handling money may wear disposable gloves and will exercise thorough hand washing procedures.

THE SCHOOL OFFICE

- The school office will be open, but parents and children will not be allowed into the office.
- We will not be accepting late arrivals to school via the office. Parents will have to phone the school and a member of staff will meet your child at their designated gate and bring them into school via their designated door.
- Adhering to government guidance, parents will not be permitted on the school grounds and should only be entering the school if this has been previously agreed.
- Where parents must enter the school building, appropriate hygiene measures and social distancing will be adhered to. Parents will be asked to wear masks.
- Parents should ring / email the school rather than present in person as a means of preventing spread of the virus.

COMMUNICATION: SCHOOL TO HOME / HOME TO SCHOOL

- The school will endeavour to make regular, timely and clear communication within the school community. The main sources of communication will be the school app, website, phone calls and emails. Procedures will be evaluated and updated, when necessary, and in accordance with new legislation guidelines.
- Rather than sending in notes, we would encourage parents to contact the school by phoning the school office. A message can be passed on to the relevant member of staff.
- Parents can email the secretary, principal or relevant class teacher.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

- DE and EA guidelines will be followed when completing Risk Assessments.
- Risk Assessments will be in place to target start of school day, during school day and end of school day.
- Risk Assessments will be carried out to meet the specific needs of pupils and staff in school.
- Necessary precautions will be taken in relation to the identified risks.
- The Fire Evacuation Procedure has been amended in light of COVID-19.

STAFF PROTOCOLS

In Markethill Primary School, all members of staff will adhere to the following additional guidelines in consideration of the safety of themselves and others;

- Staff should use their own cup and cutlery and ensure that these are cleaned after use.
- Staff should respect social distancing in the staff room and staggered break and lunch times.
- Staff will use appropriate cleaning materials with personal belongings and ensure baggage brought into school can be wiped down.
- Staff will wear a face covering, when required, in line with current guidance.
- Staff will inform the school of any symptoms of COVID-19 at home and at school.
- Staff will inform the school if isolating with a family member who is displaying symptoms or has tested positive.
- Staff will get tested and inform the school of the results.

SCHOOL VISITORS

- The school will be limiting the number of people entering the school grounds and building.
- If a parent or a visitor requires access to the school building he/she should wear a mask and use the hand sanitiser at the front door.

BREAKFAST CLUB AND 123 CLUB

- Numbers will be restricted to ensure safety for all.
- A system to determine how places are allocated will be used if numbers exceed what we can accommodate in the 123 Room.
- Places will have to be booked in advance to enable staff to know what children to expect each morning / afternoon.
- Bookings will end every Thursday to enable staff to plan on Friday for the following week.
- Parents may contact the secretary to enquire if places are available during the week.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLUBS

These cannot be facilitated as they bring too many children into contact and mix the class groupings.

BEHAVIOUR

A review and amendment will be made to the Positive Behaviour Policy. Pupils who wilfully refuse to adhere to arrangements of social distancing and deliberately cough or spit at pupils or staff, putting them at risk, will be subject to sanctions, up to and including exclusion.

SEN PROVISION AND 1:1 SUPPORT

The provision of one to one care / support is integral to the delivery of quality education and support to our most vulnerable pupils. In accordance with guidelines, social distancing between the adult and child will be relaxed to allow for interaction. However, staff will be permitted to wear visors and, or, masks while carrying out these roles.

PUPIL ATTENDANCE

It is important for well-being, mental health, development and progression that children attend school as much as possible. Parents / carers will be informed that:

- No child with **any** symptoms associated with COVID-19 should attend school for any reason. Children should not attend school if they, or a member of their household, displays **any** symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 include:
 - A high temperature: this means you feel hot to touch your cheek or back. You do not need to measure your temperature. If a child presents as unwell in school, he/she will be isolated and supervised by a member of staff until collected. All relevant PHA guidelines must be followed.
 - A new continuous cough: this means coughing a lot for more than 1 hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough it may be worse than usual).
 - Anosmia: the loss or change in your normal sense of smell, it can also affect your sense of taste.
- All children should attend school unless self-isolating or shielding.
- No child should attend school if he / she has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.
- No child should be in school if someone in their household has symptoms.

At all times, parents should take direction from the Public Health Agency regarding procedures for dealing with potential Covid-19.

THE NI CURRICULUM

- The initial focus will be on supporting personal, social, health and emotional aspects of learning to support children’s wellbeing. The fact that children have experienced a significant period of change and may have experienced varying levels of loss, will be addressed.
- The school will quickly establish new routines for the children to follow.
- We will ensure that numeracy and literacy skills will continue to be developed.
- Staff will remain in their designated classrooms. If staff have to provide support in another classroom, proper hygiene, i.e. thorough handwashing will be adhered to, along with 2m social distancing.

PLAY EQUIPMENT

Learning Through Play is an essential part of a child’s school experience and is key to a child’s development. The following measures will be in place:

- play equipment will be washed / sanitised regularly;
- resources that are not easily washable will be removed - non-wipeable items like soft furnishings, teddies etc;
- the number of toys in each room will be limited;
- toys should be rotated and cleaned after removal with antibacterial products;
- playdough will be given to children individually and will not be shared;
- outdoor play will be kept to 1 class at a time in their designated playground zone to limit interaction between classes/bubbles.

STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

- Giving children in Foundation Stage opportunities to participate in play-based learning activities in a stimulating environment.
- Continuing practical, experiential learning within the classroom in our KS1 and KS2 classes, while encouraging social distancing.
- Allowing P.E. to be regularly accessible for all pupils to target mental health and well-being.
- Continuing to contingency plan for the delivery of remote learning in the event of school closure or if a class of pupils need to isolate with consideration given to teacher time budgets.
- Making use of the outdoors to deliver learning and P.E..

HOMEWORK

- Homework comprising spellings, tables, reading and online activities will be completed.
- Reading schemes:
 - Books will be sent home on either a Monday or a Tuesday.
 - Books must be returned on Thursday. This is to enable books to be untouched before reallocation the following week.
- Novels:
 - Novels will be distributed and should remain at home.
 - Homework activities may be set via google classroom and completed at home or, during class reading, shared work will be copied or displayed on the whiteboard.
- Online activities – children will be receiving passwords to enable this. **Please retain this in a safe place.**
- Children who are absent for 1 – 2 days can complete homework activities at home. If off longer, the class teacher will provide work using Google Classroom or Seesaw platforms. Activities will be uploaded to these and they provide the opportunity to maintain contact between home and school. Children can complete one literacy and one numeracy activity per day, along with homework activities (reading, spellings, tables, linguistic phonics activities).

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

As a school, it is crucial that we have clear guidance on dealing with pupils and staff who become symptomatic onsite. The following steps are recommended by the Department of Education (DENI).

- In an educational setting, if anyone becomes unwell with the symptoms of COVID-19:
 - **new, continuous cough** - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or 4 coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual); or
 - **a high temperature / fever** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature; or
 - **anosmia - a loss of or a change in the normal sense of smell or taste**

they must be sent home and advised to follow the PHA guidance for households with possible Coronavirus infection. School should keep a full record of such actions and request that a parent / carer record their acknowledgement of this action.
- Contact parent / carer to arrange collection. A child awaiting collection should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door. Appropriate adult supervision will be provided for this situation. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate the child, they should be moved to an area which is at least 2m away from other people.
- If direct personal care is needed and a distance of 2m cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs) PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection.
- If a child needs to use a bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use the disabled toilet and this should be closed, cleaned and disinfected afterwards.
- If the child is seriously ill or their life is at risk, school will call 999.
- Siblings will also be removed from class to isolate and sent home with parent / carer.
- If a child or anyone in your household exhibits symptoms of Covid-19, they must not attend school and should contact the Public Health Agency (PHA) for instruction on protocols.
- If an individual does not have COVID-19 specific symptoms, they do not require a test.
- It is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate and in many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruptions to their education. In other cases, for instance, where they have a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover.
- If a pupil or staff member does not have symptoms of COVID-19, but has other cold-like symptoms, they do not need to be tested and do not need to self-isolate. The individual can attend school if fit to do so.
- If a child displays gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not attend school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days. In these instances, they should follow the school's usual attendance policy.
- Where an individual has COVID-19 symptoms and they refuse to book a test, they should not return to school for 14 days.

COLLECTION OF SYMPTOMATIC CHILD

Upon collection, the adult collecting the child will:

- be asked to sign a form detailing when the child developed symptoms, how the concern was raised, what symptoms were shown and who made the decisions regarding isolation, contact and supervision;
- be advised to contact the PHA, have the child tested for Covid-19, self-isolate and minimise contact with others where possible;
- be asked to share the results of the test with the school for 'test, track and trace' purposes, as outlined by the PHA; and,
- take siblings of the child displaying symptoms home.

At all times, the confidentiality of the individual will be paramount.

FOLLOW UP TO SYMPTOMATIC CHILD IN SCHOOL

- The parent will make contact with the school to share results of test.
- In the case of a positive result, the pupil or staff member will be contacted by the Contact Tracing Service in the PHA, and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or been within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes.
- Following a negative result, the child will continue to isolate for the time recommended by the PHA (at time of publishing, 48 hours from result of test).
- In case of positive result, the school will be contacted by 'test, track and trace' to discuss other pupils and staff who may have been in contact with the pupil.

Please note: Information is true and accurate as of date of implementation. Information is subject to change in guidance and legislation.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Reviewed by staff and governors	Policy Agree Date	Policy Review Date	Person Responsible for Review
September 2020	14 September 2020	Ongoing	Dr H McLernon