**CORONAVIRUS POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**1. Statement of Intent:**

1.1 It is our aim to minimise the spread of infection for staff and children through the implementation of controls which reduce the transmission and spread of germs.

1.2 We aim to promote and maintain the health of children and staff through the control of infectious illnesses. There is an ongoing outbreak of a Coronavirus in China. Infections have been reported in other countries, including Ireland. This policy covers the Coronavirus and requires cooperation from parents, staff and management in its implementation.

**2. Background**

2.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with advice provided through the *Health Service Executive (HSE)* and *Department of Health* and will be updated if and when the advice changes.

2.2 As of 06.03.2020 there are four confirmed cases in the west of Ireland, bring the total number of cases on the island of Ireland to thirteen.

**3. Actions**

3.1 This policy is being made available and communicated to parents, staff and relevant stakeholders on 06.03.2020.

3.2 Staff and Parents have been informed regarding *Department of Education & Skills (DES)* guidelines see: <https://bit.ly/2xhfREP>

3.3 Information sheet and teaching resources from the above webpage distributed to all classes, and teaching staff asked to teach *Social Personal Health Education (SPHE)* lessons on handwashing and sneezing etiquette.

3.4 Additional hand sanitiser and handwashing soap has been stocked in school.

3.5 Every bathroom has a soap dispenser, and a hand sanitiser dispenser is located at the entrance to the school.

**4. Information Section**

**4.1 What are Coronaviruses?**

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that can cause illnesses. Some of these

illnesses are very mild, like the common cold, while others are more severe, like SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome).

**4.2 Coronavirus 2019-nCoV**

Coronavirus 2019-nCoV has never been detected in humans before. The coronavirus recently identified in China is one of these. This new coronavirus is being named “2019–nCoV”.

**4.3 Symptoms of coronavirus 2019-nCoV**

It can take up to 14 days from exposure to the virus for the symptoms of this 2019-nCoV to appear.

**4.4 Common signs of infection include:**

4.4.1 Respiratory symptoms i.e. cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties, fever.

4.4.2 In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory

syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

**4.5 Treatment of coronavirus 2019-nCoV**

There is no specific treatment for 2019-nCoV at present, but the symptoms of the virus can be addressed.

**4.6 Reducing risks to children and staff from coronavirus 2019-nCoV**

4.6.1 Staff and pupils will wash hands regularly with antibacterial liquid soap and water. Children will be encouraged to wash their hands to the melody of ‘the Alphabet Song.’

4.6.2 Children will be shown where the hand sanitisers are and reminded to sanitise

regularly entering and exiting the school building.

4.6.3 We will teach children about coughing / sneezing etiquette i.e. cough into their flexed bent elbow.

4.6.4 We will teach children to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue and practice this as a staff.

4.6.5 We will teach children to throw the used tissue away into a bin and wash their hands. We will practise this as a staff.

4.6.6 We will have tissues available and encourage children to, ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’. We will practice this as a staff.

4.6.7 We ask parents not to send children in if they have cold or flu symptoms.

4.6.8 We ask staff not to attend if they have cold and flu like symptoms.

**5. Exclusion**

**5.1 As per HSE Guidelines, parents or staff that or planning any trips outside of Ireland should notify the school before leaving and on return give 24 hours-notice.**

**This is to check with the HSE that you can return your child to school. The situation has been described as ‘fluid’ and is changing on a daily basis.**

**5.2 If within the last 14 days:**

**the child or any member of the family** **any affected areas globally**

**OR**

has been in contact with a person diagnosed with coronavirus

**OR**

has attended a healthcare facility where patients with coronavirus are being treated

**AND**

has developed symptoms suggestive of acute respiratory illness the child should

● Stay at home

● Not go out to public places

● Not attend our setting

● Please phone the child’s GP or emergency department for medical advice,

rather than turning up in person

● Make sure that, when you phone, you mention your child’s recent travel or

exposure. These health services will arrange for them to get medical help.

|  |
| --- |
| **5.3.1 Advice for Parents of Children within our school** **If within the last 14 days** ● **The child or any member of the family** has been in **any affected areas globally in the last 14 days** **OR** ● has been in contact with a person diagnosed with coronavirus**OR** ● has attended a healthcare facility where patients with coronavirus are being treated**AND** **Where the child or family members are well and have no acute respiratory symptoms follow the advice below.**  |
| 1. You (parent or guardian) are asked to phone your local Department of Public Health by phone for further advice.
2. Stay at home until parent/guardian has contacted public health and received advice.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **5.3.2 Advice for staff/Adults working within our school** **If within the last 14 days** ● **The staff member or member of their family** has been in **any affected areas globally in the last 14 days** **OR** ● has been in contact with a person diagnosed with coronavirus**OR** ● has attended a healthcare facility where patients with coronavirus are being treated**AND** **Where the staff member or family members are well and have no acute respiratory symptoms follow the advice below.**  |
| 1. They are asked to phone their local Department of Public Health by phone for further advice.
2. Stay at home until they have contacted public health and received advice.
 |

**5.4 Staff Members & Students:**

**If they remain well, no specific measures are needed in the school/ workplace.**

Public Health will advise to watch out for any symptoms of coronavirus for 14 days from their return. The symptoms include cough, temperature and breathing difficulties. For people with no symptoms, there is no need for them to stay off work or isolate themselves. There are no restrictions regarding work or other social activities.

**5.4.1 If they develop symptoms within 14 days** (fever, cough, breathing difficulties), then they should isolate themselves (stay away from other people) and contact their GP/Doctor straight away by phone for advice. They should inform their GP/Doctor of their recent travel history and of their symptoms.

**If we have any concerns regarding the health of a child or a staff-member we may request a letter from their medical advisor to confirm that they are well and do not require exclusion from our school.**

**5.5 School Staff:**

If members of staff have no symptoms, the school does not need to take measures in the workplace. There is no need for them to stay off work or to remain separate from other people.

(From *Advice for people recently in China - Coronavirus (COVID-19) - HSE.ie*)

**5.6 Note:**

As the situation is changing on an on-going basis that the school reserves the right to exclude anyone that they feel may threaten the health and wellbeing of children and staff in the school.

**Policy Ratified: 11th March 2020**

**Chairperson’s Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_