

# Solas Chríost National School - Return to School Protocols

## Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) document 'Covid 19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening of Primary and Special Schools', the 'Solas Chríost National School – School Response Plan' and the 'Solas Chríost National School Covid-19 Policy Statement' which are all available on the school website [www.solaschriost.ie](http://www.solaschriost.ie) The protocols in this document have been formulated based on the above documents and other advice provided to the school. These protocols were put together in consultation with the staff, Parents' Association and the Board of Management of Solas Chríost National School.

## Underlying Principles

- The Board of Management and staff of Solas Chríost National School will make every 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 its duty of care to all.
- All children are to return to school for full school days for all five days of the school week (assuming this is still in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills at the time of opening).
- 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 into 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 successfully

## Drop Off and Collections

### School drop off/collection information

	School Ground open	Doors Open	Children must be in school by	Children Leave School
Breaks Block B JI/SI	8:40am	8:40am	9:00am	Junior Infants will finish school at 11:15am from 31st Aug to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept. (inclusive) 1:10pm (from 6 <sup>th</sup> Sept onwards) (JI – B Block Doors) 1:20pm (SI– Foyer Doors)
Breaks Block C 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup>	8:40am	8:40am	9:00am	2:20pm onwards 4 classes at one minute intervals (1 <sup>st</sup> a, 1 <sup>st</sup> b , 2 <sup>nd</sup> a, 2 <sup>nd</sup> b,)
Breaks Block D 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup>	8:40am	8:40am	9:00am	2:15pm onwards 4 classes at one minute intervals (3 <sup>rd</sup> a, 3 <sup>rd</sup> b, 4 <sup>th</sup> a, 4 <sup>th</sup> b,)
Breaks Block A 5 <sup>th</sup> /6 <sup>th</sup>	8:40am	8:40am	9:00am	2:10pm onwards 4 classes at one minute intervals (5 <sup>th</sup> a, 5 <sup>th</sup> b, 6 <sup>th</sup> a, 6 <sup>th</sup> b,)
Speech and language Class	8:30am	8:30am	8:30am	2:00pm

**Children are encouraged to walk/cycle/scoot to school as much as possible**

## **Drop-off Plan (All children have a 20 minute window to come to school between 8:40am and 9:00am)**

School Grounds will be opened at 8:40am:

- Drop and go system
- Children are welcome onto the school grounds from 8:40am.
- Children walk around to their **Block Door** and walk straight in to their classroom where they will meet their teacher. Children from Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> class and 2<sup>nd</sup> class will enter the school via the Foyer doors (between Block B and Block C). Children from Junior Infants will enter the school via the Block B doors.
- The window for children entering the school is from 8:40am to 9:00am. Children who are in their class by 9:00am will be recorded as being on time for school.
- Parents of Junior and Senior Infants or children with Special Educational Needs are asked to drop off their child at their child's Block Door for the first week. From the second week onwards, it is desirable that parents of children from the Infant classes drop off their children at the school gates and allow them to walk around to their Block Door by themselves. Staff will be spread along the school grounds to monitor and direct the children.
- Parents of children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class are promoted to drop off their children at the school gates and allow them to walk around to their Block Door.
- The Speech and Language Classes will start school at 8:30am and will be met off their bus by their class teacher.

## **Collection Plan**

School outlines its collection plan:

- One Parent from Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> Class and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class is welcome to collect their child(ren) from the Junior Yard after school
- It is desirable that children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class arrange to meet their parent outside the school gates if possible
- Children from Junior Infants will finish school at 11:15am from Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August to Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept.
- Junior Infants will be released from the B Block doors
- Senior Infants will be released from the Foyer Doors (between Block B and Block C)
- Classes from 3<sup>rd</sup> Class to 6<sup>th</sup> Class will be released at 1 minute intervals at their timeslot (see table above)
- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Class will be released from school at 2:10pm (Block A)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Class will be released from school at 2:15pm (Block D)
- 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Class will be released from school at 2:20pm (Block B – use Foyer doors)
- Junior Infants will be released directly to each parent at 1:10pm from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September onwards.
- Senior Infants will be released directly to each parent at 1:20pm
- Children from Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> class and 2<sup>nd</sup> class will exit the school via the Foyer doors
- Parents and children are requested to leave the premises as soon as possible
- Children cannot be collected early from school unless an official appointment card is presented to the school. (Unless the child is deemed to be sick by the school). The school secretary must be contacted in advance of collection by email or phone call.
- The early collection of children after 1:00pm will not be permitted

## **Parents on School Grounds**

- There should only be one adult from each family on the school grounds at any one time
- No parents are allowed into the school building, including for infants on the first day of school. The school will do everything it can to assist anxious children starting or returning to school. If your child is anxious or upset, please stand back to a quieter place and a staff member will come to assist. We are here to make this a positive experience for parents and children.
- Toilets will not be available to parents or children after the school day has ended. This includes the toilet facilities at the school's reception.
- We kindly ask that the first five parking spaces at the main school gates are kept free for Grandparents who collect children from the school. There is plenty of parking along the Cookstown Road to the entrance of Belgard Heights

**ALL ADULTS ON THE SCHOOL GROUNDS SHOULD WEAR A FACE COVERING and maintain physical distancing of 2 metres at all times**

# School and Classroom Organisation

## Staff

- A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.
- If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed.
- Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks etc.
- Staff meetings and other meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.
- A no hand shaking policy is to be implemented.
- To Minimise gathering of school staff at the beginning or end of the school day the facilities in the staffroom will not be available
- Staff will be allocated times for breaks and teachers will be grouped with their Block colleagues
- The splitting of classes will not be permitted for sick days
- EPV day structure to be announced
- School Breaks will be as follows

	<b>First Break</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>	<b>SNA's and Teachers on duty in the Block will have their breaks 15 mins/25 mins before the children's breaks start – social distancing in the PE Hall</b>
Breaks Block B JI/SI	10:00 (15 mins)	11:30 (25 mins)	
Breaks Block A 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup>	10:40 (15 mins)	12:30 (25 mins)	
Breaks Block C 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup>	10:20 (15 mins)	12:00 (25 mins)	
Breaks Block D 5 <sup>th</sup> /6 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 (15 mins)	1:00 (25 mins)	

- Staff must bring their own utensils, cups etc. for lunch each day.
- Hot water and regular toasting facilities will be available to staff in the staff room

## Yard/Supervision

- The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.
- Teachers will supervise other classes at lunchtime etc. on strictly a per block basis
- Play time/outdoor activities/outdoor PE times will be set to minimise crowding at the entrance and exits. (see above)
- It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary schools play together outdoors, but in so far as practical it is helpful to keep to consistent groups.
- Children should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.
- Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people. No equipment will let out at break times.

## Corridors

- 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.
- Staff and pupils will keep left when using the corridors
- Children should use the corridors as little as possible

## School Office

Access to the school building by parents or visitors is not permitted. Please contact the school secretary by email [info@solaschriost.ie](mailto:info@solaschriost.ie) or by phone (01) 451 7134 for all requests and enquiries. The post box at the front gates of the school can also be used if anything needs to be dropped in to the office. Any early collection of children must be arranged in advance with the school secretary.

## Classroom Blocks, Classroom Bubbles and Pods

The school is divided into 4 blocks and there are 2 classes at each level (Block D: 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> class, Block B: Junior and Senior Infants, Block C, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> class, Block A: 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class). The 2 Speech and Language Classes are classified as a further Block. Every class in each Block will be referred to as a **bubble** and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into **Pods**. A pod is a group of children (approximately 4 to 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom.

**Blocks should never mix, Bubbles should not mix and Pods should never mix for indoor or outdoor activities**

**Teachers should only enter one Block (unless assigned to for SEN/SNA purposes by the Principal)**

**Teachers should only enter one Bubble (unless assigned to for SEN/SNA purposes by the Principal)**

**Teachers should link with as few PODs as possible**

- A class teacher will 'link' with all the POD's in their class
- An SNA/ Support teacher should 'link' with as few POD's as possible when providing in class or withdrawal support

## Wet Day Routines:

The routine for drop off and collection will remain as above for wet days. There will be no facility for children to come into the school before 8:40am

## Homework:

The class teachers will advise you about what books and copies are to be kept in the school. The transfer of books and copies between home and school will be kept to a minimum.

## Meetings and Communications:

If you wish to contact your child's teacher, please leave a message in your child's journal or your child's homework folder. You can also leave a message with the school secretary by phone (01) 451 7134 or via email [info@solaschriost.ie](mailto:info@solaschriost.ie)

## Uniforms:

Children will be required to wear their full uniform/school tracksuit as follows:

Class	Uniform	Tracksuit
Junior and Senior Infants	Monday, Wednesday & Friday	Tuesdays & Thursday
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	Tuesdays & Thursday	Monday, Wednesday & Friday
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	Monday, Wednesday & Friday	Tuesdays & Thursday
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Class	Tuesdays & Thursday	Monday, Wednesday & Friday

All children must wear their full uniform in on the first day of school. This timetable is to facilitate the washing of uniforms/tracksuits during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Hygiene

Hand sanitiser will be available in all classrooms and corridors in the school. Paper towels will be available for all children to dry their hands. Children are advised to carry tissues on them at all times and discard them in the bin after use.

## Yard

All Blocks will have staggered breaks during the day. There will be a maximum of one Block (4 classes) on the school yard for breaks. Each class will have a separate zone to play in.

## School Shop:

The school shop will not be open for children or parents.

### **Happy Days Play Group:**

The Play Group will now operate from the Breakfast Club instead of Block A so that all children in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes have access to larger sized classrooms.

### **Breakfast Club & Extra-Curricular Activities:**

The Breakfast Club will not be available until further notice. The Afterschool's Club will proceed with the appropriate policies put in place as per government guidance. The Afterschool's Club will now take place in the PE Hall. The Board of Management will also consider the reopening of the Breakfast club and reintroducing extra-curricular activities when it is deemed safe to do so based on guidance from the Dept. of Education.

### **Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some school equipment needs to be shared including IT, Maths and Science equipment as well as the equipment used for station teaching activities. Thorough cleaning of such shared equipment will be carried out after each use.

### **Special Educational Support**

In keeping with the school's Special Education Needs Policy, support will be provided through a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure, in so far as is practicable, our Support Educational Teachers (SET) and Special Needs Assistants (SNA) will work within the confines of the smallest number of blocks, classroom pods and classroom bubbles as possible.

- 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.
- Where children receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing will be maintained in so far as is possible between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be cleaned after each group.

### **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, the Special Education Teacher (SET) allocated to that year group will teach the class. The time spent by a SET teacher substituting in a class will be reallocated to the SET teacher's caseload as soon as a substitute teacher becomes available. If no substitute or SET teacher is available it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class to attend school on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents. The school will do everything it can to ensure this scenario does not arise.

### **PE (Physical Education)**

Where possible, PE will take place outdoors. Pupils will wash / sanitise their hands before and after using equipment. Equipment will be wiped down after use. Each class will be allocated its own set of PE equipment. As soon as the Dept. of Education allow for PE indoors, the school's Board of Management will address the matter of reopening the PE Hall for students straight away.

### **Payments to the School:**

Online payments are available through Aladdin Connect. Please contact the school secretary if you require any assistance.

### **First Day of School**

- Children only need to bring their copies and stationery items on the first day of school.
- All children should wear their full uniform.
- All equipment including stationery, books and clothing should be labelled.
- All books and copies should be covered with plastic/wipeable covers
- Children should be able to open/close their own shoes.
- Children should be able to put on/take off their own coat.
- Children should be able to open close their own bag, lunchbox, drink etc.
- Lunch boxes should be washed daily in warm soapy water.

# Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19:

**Pupils or staff** should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.

If a **staff member** displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, they should leave the building as soon as possible or they should wait in the Isolation Room in the C Block (C5) until they are ready to leave. The staff member must contact their GP as soon as possible.

If a **pupil** displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians should be contacted immediately by the secretary to collect their child. This may require another member of staff from the Block to assist passing on the message to the secretary.
- The secretary should ask the cleaner on duty (10am to 12:30pm) (1:30pm onwards) to sanitise the child's classroom followed by the Isolation room. If there is no cleaner available, the sanitisation of the classroom and the Isolation room will be organised by the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- The Support teacher for the class will supervise the class straight away. The support teacher will bring the children out to the yard until the class is sanitized.
- If the Support teacher is 'in charge' of a case, all other children under their care will return to their class. The Support teacher will not return to class until it has been sanitized, as necessary.
- The doors between the classes should be left open and the opposite teacher should be asked to supervise class if waiting for the Support teacher to arrive.
- The child should be offered (if they are comfortable to wear one) a facemask to wear when they exit the class.
- The child should be taken out of the class straight away with their coat and bag by the teacher or staff member to the Isolation room (C5)
- The staff member wear a mask and an apron. The staff member can decide whether or not to wear gloves
- Social distancing of 2 metres between the staff member and the child should be maintained at all times
- Isolation Route: The child should be brought around to the Isolation Room (C5). For staff who are not in the C Block (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Block), the children should be brought out through their Block door and walk around the back of the school to the outside entrance of the C Block and straight into the Isolation Room (C5). 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.
- If the Room is occupied or has the 'Needs to be Sanitized' sign at the door or displayed, the child should be isolated in the labelled isolation area of the PE Hall (Entering and exiting the Hall via the side doors at the side of the school.
- The staff member may take the child's temperature with a non-contact thermometer.
- The staff member must not touch their nose, mouth or eyes whilst caring for them and undertake hand hygiene
- 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.
- Parents will be brought outside around to the Isolation Room to collect their child on arrival to the school by the secretary
- **Parents will be advised to call their G.P. and given a yellow instruction sheet available from the Isolation Room**
- If parents are non-contactable and/or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform the emergency services that a pupil is presenting with symptoms of Covid-19.
- If a child/person presents as being extremely unwell, for whatever possible cause, 999 or 112 and ambulance should be called
- 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.
- If it is determined that a child requires to be tested, any other household contacts should be removed from the school setting.
- If a symptomatic child has a Covid-19 'not detected' result, the child should remain at home until he/she is clinically well enough to return to school, unless parents are specifically asked by HSE Public Health for their child to remain excluded because of other investigations e.g. if the child is a known close contact of a now confirmed case.
- The child must not return to school until at least 48 hours since the symptoms have passed.
- Aprons and gloves and other PPE used must be discarded in the Isolation Room bin.
- The Isolation Room bin must be emptied, double bagged, date labelled by the cleaner or person sanitising the room.
- The class teacher will take charge (Bring to Isolation Room etc.) if a child displays symptoms of Covid-19 in their care and disposed of according to cleaning procedures.
- An SNA will take charge if a child that they provide care needs for, develops symptoms
- The Support Teacher will take charge if a child develops symptoms in their care.
- If a child on yard displays symptoms, the class teacher will be called from their break to take charge
- Protocols for vaccinated staff may be different.

E&OE (For any errors or ambiguities please let the Principal know straight away)

## **Children and Staff 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 a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 (May be different for vaccinated staff)
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- 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 who have returned home after travelling abroad to a country which is not on the green list and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell
- Children who require paracetamol or ibuprofen should not attend school

## **PPE (Personal Protective Equipment):**

It is recommended that teachers and other staff wear face coverings, similar to those worn in shops or on public transport, when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. As per DES Guidelines, primary school children are not required to wear a face covering, unless they are a suspected Covid-19 case.

## **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

- ✓ High temperature (above 38 Degrees Celsius)
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

## **Frequency of Hand Hygiene:**

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.

## **Impact of a Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a confirmed case of Covid-19

- Public health advice will be sought and followed
- The parents of children in the class will be notified as per Public Health 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. Staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times. The school is mindful of its obligations under GDPR

## **Supporting the Learning of Children at "very high risk" of Covid -19**

Where a pupil is in the "very high risk" group and has been advised by a medical professional not to attend school or while not being in the very high risk group but has medical advice not to attend school the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant) will provide individualised support for his/her learning in consultation with parents / guardians. Medical documentation will be required.

*This document is a working document and will updated as necessary. The school community will be advised of any changes.*

Edward Kelly (Principal)